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ETCETERA

VOL. TWO NO. THREE

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BREAK DOWN

BY DOUG MOENCH

While I cringe at the prospect of allying this third installment of Breakdown with the process of Homework (or worse, to a writer, Research), I find myself compelled to send you scurrying off for a pamphlet of revivieal in MONSTERS UNLEASHED #1, a Marvel Comics Group, 75¢ magazine; go on---see if you can extract it from your meticulously arranged collection files without precipitating a calamitous avalanche of spewing pulp paper.

Got it? *Sniff-sniff* Yes, the beloved scent of musty-cheap paper gone sour with encroaching mold is permeating the air even here. You must have gotten it. And for those of you who've escaped this little farce still smelling like a rose... shame on you. This is your last chance to get it.

Okay; now we can settle down to business (and don't worry about those recalcitrant ones who've seen the error of their ways and are even now assiduously deflowering themselves amidst the reeking pulp piles ---they'll catch up later.

Plunge fl: Marvel once trouped along under the handle of Timely.

Across the bottom of this and the next page and the top of the third page is a sequence showing the cinev to progression mentioned above. This particular sequence is from "A Stalking Moonlit Night" from HKNIR no. 48 with art by Rich Buckler and Bill Dubay.

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They don't think it's so timely now, but when they laboured under the delusion that the first step toward creation of graphic story (or comic strip, curmudgeon!) was the development of a complete script--panel by panel, Narrational, Narrow, Skywald, Gold Key, Charlton, and (I think) Archie are still labouring. This means that Stan Lee (Old mythology slug write for timely back then? Oh yeah; maybe Mickey Spillane) would conceptualize the entire story right up there in his head. He'd dictate the number of panels per page, stipulate the position of each panel on the page, and tie the whole schmear together with appropriate dialogue balloons and pertaining to the characters and scenes he'd described. But an altogether bad procedure...

Plunge #2: But then (when I do not know, but it must have been somewhere around Kirby-cycle-number-three that Timely became aware) and it was more than a nominal change. A new process was ushered in and it was one designed to implement (and explain) the maximum potential of the graphic story. Graphic stories are not comic books. Graphic-novel stories told in pictures, a series of pictures. A film is a series of pictures, too, but the time-relationship between each picture (or frame) on a filmstrip is microscopic, right? And this sequence of pictures is flashed 24 times per second that they blend into smooth movement, specialized to the individual portion of each picture. That's great for films, but since there's something like 24 frames of film projected on the screen per second, a comics artist would have to be mentally dedicated to attempt a corresponding sequence on the printed page (after all, even Bonne-Brothers employ hundreds of artists for their flicks' illustrative work). And what 12-year-old reader would possess the stamina to even hold a 48-page issue of FANTASTIC FOUR--or care to wonder at a series of pictures with such negligible--almost imperceptible--changes? Not many. And think of the poor scripters! To get such controlled action via the visuals, he would be restricted to the kinds of syllabic sequences of a film. So the comics decided they'd better just excerpt key shots from films' comparable plethora of flickering pictures...until, one for a film's every 100. (And yes, I know there's been a Keaton, a Kinner and Sternberg and Smith and, of course, Eisenstein, Griffith, Welles and Chaplin who have employed closeups for expressionistic comedy, but, for reasons of space alone, we'll not discuss them). In short, spurts of such "special effectery" as the "Kirby-Explosion" emerged to disrupt the flow of their stories with a few choppy pictures. When well done, the practice is acceptable and--although, thoroughly saturation, the effect seems to be approached--it is not unusual and a laudable achievement on the part of the pictures-writer. But before we have to strain out the superfluous nonsense and purple prose-ness of vital narrative pictures. Since Stan (or whoever was the writer of the artist who might've been Kirby) decided that no artist could do better to determine what pictures in a series of infinite possibilities were the best dramatically relate the escapades of the FANTASTIC FOUR, these were graphic stories, right? Telling a story in pictures, the picture-creator should logically assume one of the storytelling responsibility, with the scripter relegated to a subordinate position. But the writer would still (usually, anyway) come up with the plot. He'd either tell the artist his story in a brief outline or hand him a synopsis and say, "Here, draw your pictures." The artist would read the synopsis, mutter "It stinks", and set to work elaborating the succinct plot into his series of pictures.

Now the artist had to decide how many issues it would comprise a page, and what each would contain. In short, he told the story in picture

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form. But since we're not dealing with silent movies--sound comic artists are notorious for poor spelling and grammar--the artist would relinquish his beautifully-wrought pencils to the writer who, if he had not by this time forgotten what the plot was all about, proceed to mutilate the beautifully-wrought pencils with a scattered sprinkle of captions, dialogue balloons, sound-effects and footnotes. The illustrator would then indelibly stick all these words around the beautifully-wrought pencils, and then the inker would render whatever was left of the beautifully-wrought pencils. Not an altogether bad procedure either, seemingly allowing the best of both worlds to emerge with a synthesized medium in its own right. Of course there are those disgruntled Purists (Vainly Carping Artists) who feel words destroy the mood and holler about the destroyed composition of their beautifully-wrought pencils. "Look at the caption over there saying that tree limb!' they would froth. "It's supposed to mimick that tree limb and there's now a dirty word grey blotch on the covering it!" they would shriek. But that's somebody composition at this panel over there is destroyed by that lousy balloon!" they would rave. "Your eyes are supposed to travel in an 'S' from the upper left hand corner down and over to the lower right hand corner and you stuck that grotesque balloon right in the junction of the 'S'! I won't read that. They were invariably right, but you can't always have the choice: Is this a portfolio of beautiful pictures or an integrated story?

Most comic readers opt for the latter, although there are some who will pay $5.00 for a Spanish comic just so they can glom onto some beautifully-wrought Marcote art and marvel at the finish of it. (My soul shrivels every time I meet one of these.)

Flunge #2A: So that was Marvel's solution to the problem of visually artistic graphic stories--put the artist in the driver's seat. National soon countered the problem and gussied their solution in the form of elevating number of artists into editorial positions of power. Far from one lofty statuses merely these new art-directors could exert some visual influence on the stories they produced, but could also weight complete scripts from writers. See, the artist could then know what story would appear in each panel and could attune the pencils to the dialogue compatible with his idiosyncratic views of "good composition". That's fine, but then there's still room for tinkering about static visuals. All the fine 50th-placement-of-balloons is not going to help a sloppy script that has 18 successive panels of only one character talking. I.e. Marvel set its artists loose on creating visually provocative panels and let the writers fill in the talk with their talents and without having contrived. Harder on the writer but invariably better for the story. (Of course, under the aegis of the "Marvel Method" writers are usually treated to long stretches of action panels filled with nothing but cheap flippancy and subsequent dull structuring of those panels to plot exposition which is necessarily jammed on the balloons. But I'm of the opinion that it generally works out to the best advantage.)

Flunge #3: Okay, now we have the advent of the Marvel black-and-white books. Marvel, undoubtedly, has set as visually stunning as the Warren magazines (which are probably among the best artists in the world), but they have established a priority of story -telling (something that Bill Dubay is even now trying to do at Warren) and believe me, I can't wait) as opposed to the standard comic book structures. And, wonder of wonders, some of these stories are storylines--at least in the b&w books--is being accomplished with a refreshing method of complete-script-to-first. Perhaps this indicates a renaissance of

faith in the visual- conceptualization abilities of scripters (and why not? writers can be artists in their brains) who are now so accustomed to the "Marvel Method" that they can't write it by complete-script proxy. Whatever it indicates, we have the "Marvel Method" to thank for a nifty little thing in MONSTERS UNLEASHED #1. (See: I haven't forgotten!)

Plunge #4: You see, working under the Marvel Method, a scripter was always conscious of those rare, capricious artists who would inevitably explode at the sight of his beautifully-wrought pencils whenever they ran out of words. Cognizant of the fact that a large balloon would irrevocably cover up a vital tree limb or something, the writer was forced to utilize a number of small balloons which would benignly fit into open spaces within the art. Sometimes the open spaces in the art were so small that a writer was constricted to a mere fragment of a sentence in each balloon. The beginning of a sentence would be placed in a balloon over the tree limb here and the conclusion of the sentence would be placed under the tree limb over there. This, I suspect, was a mandatory disadvantage at first. But being as resourceful as any of the masked men they controlled on the four-color page, the scripters were adept at turning the latest enlivening in those cloud-like fragmented balloons. Doesn't one cloud in the sky look drab? Doesn't a second complement the first, as it off to celestial glory? Yep. They created gargantuan out of those fragmented balloons, they made the interpretive effect of the balloons greater than the sum of its parts. They used a second balloon to accentuate the first. They left you hanging on the inconclusiveness of the first balloon only to slam you in the face with the significance of the second. They used balloons as the caption breaks a prose writer uses punctuation-and, by extension, to even more acute advantage.

Plunge #5: So whether Gerry Conway's first story in MONSTERS UNLEASHED #1 was written complete-script-first or Marvel-Method-per-file first, it is because of the Marvel Method's direct or indirect influence that we have the beautiful word progression and putative significance of a 6-word caption in the third panel of page 8.

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ABOVE: The above mentioned panel from MONSTERS UNLEASHED #1, from a story by Gerry Conway with art by Pablo Marcos.

SELF-ANALYSIS

BY TOM FAGAN

Tomorrow he would give the interview. But tonight he would simply enjoy meditating about it.

'Twould be jolly. 'twould be droll, best of all, though,it would be cutting. A slashing of imagination; a burning of wonderment; a sterilization of fantasy.

Presumably, this time he would talk about television. Envision the new detective-god here. Relate the cause and effect of this new image upon two, ten, trillion, Rheey-like viewers.

That was what the interview called for; that was the agreement. Make another hero; down a favorite; sell a million copies, or more, of magnificent deposit one thousand not some in the personal checking account.

All for talking. Ah, what one could do with conversation. Especially when one was quoted. Especially when one's words were quoted in print.

One could rouse a whole country— make a whole world a bit fearful. Maybe with a modicum of practice— frighten an entire universe.

Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow. True he would give learned views about this currently popular figure of evil and authority, who brought justice about with clamor-and-up cops, flashing fists, and armaments of awe.

Criticize first the novels and their writers, then the moviemakers for bringing the tales into ordinary reality on grayish screens, then the television moguls for their part in bidding a nation-wide, twice-weekly welcome to the new champion; then the composers for introducing stirring theme song arrangement as top ten hit of the day; then the fanhook boys with their specialized Tee Shirts and Stationery for sale with blatant advertisements of "Have No Face I's Gang, I'm A Madman Too— Here's My Hard-Earned Dollar for!"

Then—oh, how subtle—Introduce Comic Books into the interview. Convince the reporter copping down each rapid word with enthusiasm how comics were really acceptable, if not for comics of the '50's, 40's, 30's and hell's enough the 60's, such a new television hero just could not be popular today.

But do it subtly. Make it appear like this is the deduction reached by the interviewer himself— but of course he has your backing all the way in this brilliant conclusion.

Agree. Concur. Meditate a bit. Seem to ponder somewhat. And the recording pencil will scrawl across copy paper with gusto.

Oh, the finished article! All about the television hero presumably, but good, old, homely paragraphs about comics. Enough to have the public's jaundiced eye fixed upon them in constant distaste.

Who would really be the target of tomorrow's interview? Right now, he just could not see. Not he'd find one. For he'd already:

Extinguished GREEN LANTERN; snapped off PLASTIC MAN; bressed over AIRBOY; outdone DARKEVIL; crushed SUBMARINER; smashed SPY SMASHER; blanked BULLSEYAH; wrapped up SPITFIRE AND THE IRON HEELS; snuffed out the HUMAN TORCH; and best of all, had emasculated BATMAN and de-sexed WONDER WOMAN.

So many waiting. HAWKMAN to be pinioned; bring the FLASH to a screeching halt; bang an albatross around the neck of SUBMARINER. So many ready for the ultimate dehumanization.

He jigged in joy about the room at the thought. Doom with them, he shouted happily through the open dormer window. His shadow was a

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the view from Europe:
Part two:
A Short History of British Fandom

NICK LANDAU

Nick Landau is the editor of the British fanzines Comic Media and Comic Catalog.

I would be very surprised to hear of any American comic fan who could name more than just one (well, two at most) British fanzines. Statistically, there are two reasons for this: the first is financial, meaning that British fanzine editors do not try to sell beyond their own world. And the second reason is that we all have a very strange distribution of fanzines inasmuch that we have more editors than any other type of fanzine.

The American zine editor is catering to a large market(measured in the thousands) and knows that he can sell hundreds of copies of his fanzine, and thus not suffer too much loss (or too much profit in many cases nowadays) if all his copies did not sell. However, the British zine editor does not have that large a market potential. There are probably not more than 400- 500 active comic fans in this country (and by active, I mean those who participate in such fan activities like attending conventions, writing fanzines), although there are probably at least twice that number of "fringe" fans. And, fanzine sales in this country do depend a lot on these fringe fans; you will find that you can always sell your fanzine at 200 copies of any zine, and, generally, fanzine titles with a name will sell more. The extra sales over and above 400-500 will come from other foreign sales or catching those fringe fans. And there is the problem, that being that most British fanzine editors don't try to sell their fanzines. You see, they feel that they've produced this zine... and that's it. Isn't it... they go onto the next one and forget about the one that came before, not getting that unless they sell that one there probably won't be another. Or else they just put out another advert into the same old zines, trying to reach that niche of fans, simply can't decide whether or not to spend their godforsaken pennies on it, instead of attempting to reach either the international scene, or doing a bit more leg-work to achieve better distribution. (The fact that the more financially successful fanzines are all based in London is due to distribution. Look at the following list--all zines are based in or near London.)

Doesn't it seem strange that the majority of regular fanzines are editor and ego zines? Perhaps market condition or editor expectations are such that an editor believes that they can sell editorial rather than any other type of magazine. Or do editors seem easier to put together? Or have all these other editors been led by the success of their editors, thus drawing others into the market? The answer to this question lies somewhere in another article, to be written at another time and at another place.

The second most common category is, strangely enough, the newszine, and, lastly, the general fanzine. There are only two or only one of these regular zines.

Adzines and newszines certainly have their limitations, and there is always a maximum clientele for such enterprises, limited to the number

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the view from Europe:

Wolf's Old World Report

WOLFGANG FUCHS

Wolfgang Fuchs is a German comics fan and the co-author of COMICS: ANATMY OF A MASS MEDIA, published by Little, Brown and Company.

Germany, in 1973, is experiencing an unprecedented comics boom that has just about everybody pushing comics to the market. Comic book sales are now well above the 150,000,000 copies per year mark, yet there still appears no end to the rise in sales increase. Overproduction may be just around the corner and this will no doubt slowly but inevitably lead to fierce competition.

This just goes to show that the comics have come a long way in Germany despite a relatively short history. The comic book was not introduced in Germany until after World War Two to be sure, children's magazines existed before that and there were the children's pages with picture-stories, but you could not apply the term 'comics' to them as they were in the tradition of William Busch, a German artist, strictly parting picture from text. The biting satire of Busche HIS AND MORITZ had been watered down to a sugary sweetness of child proofs at the time when MAX UND MORITZ served as a blueprint for THE KATZENJAMMER KIDS, thus, in a roundabout way, serving as some influence in the development of the comic strip.

In return for this, the American concept of the comics hit Germany around 1927, first with comic strips and then with the comic book, which almost unnoticed consists of comic origin from ever coming into being.

Among the first comic books to go on sale in Germany was MICKY MAUS (MICKEY MOUSE) - a German version of WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES with Mickey's rendition of DONALD DUCK as the lead story.

Other comics were patterned after American strip reprint books or were outright collections of American adventure comics like TOM MIX or SUPERMAN. (SUPERMAN got off to a bad start, however. His magazine folded after three issues with its first try. The second time around the magazine lasted two years or so. He reached his third chance in September of 1966 and his book has been on sale ever since.)

Then the first true German comics appeared, notably Rolf Kauka's FIXI UND FOXI magazine in the cowboy adventure comics--many of them drawn by a very prolific,but not especially gifted, artist and some imported from Italy.

About 1954, together with the American comic, the Western comic attack on German comics was mounted, although some of the Western comics were ever published in German. Many comics disappeared in the controversy onslaught by getting blacklisted as being objectionable, and a blacklisted comic could not be sold or displayed at newsstands and in the sale of them to minors was forbidden. Then, gradually, there was a change comics for so called 'good books' were readily sold and the comics being burned. Finally, opposition to comics somehow embedded what as a generation that had grown up with comics offered them greater tolerance. Sales went up. The Germans realized that comics can be collectors-items that they were not the first to discover this.

It was then tried to start academic discussions and publish books on the matter of comics in an attempt to attain some respect. Others tries with longer histories in comic books, even to the extent that a museum attempt was the forming of INCOS (the history of comics). Interested in COMIC Strips and books?

Germany's first comicon, which was held April 21-23 this year in Berlin, was arranged by INCOS. And there is still much to be done by INCOS about the wakening interest in comics.

As far as fanzines go, the INCOS newsletter is a step in the right

direction. After all, there are at present ten publishers grinding out comics on an amazing rate. They (including, of course, all the best selling ones, are published weekly. MICKY MAUS sells about 450,000 weekly issues, PRIL UND POLI about 380,000, and several others more than 100,000.

Appearing out of nowhere in mid-1972 was LIEN, a 52-page weekly devoted mainly to the adventure comics material out of the French magazines PILOTE and the Belgian TINTIN. The circulation of LIEN quickly put in time from 0 to more than 500,000 copies per week! Although half the high esteem everywhere else, the material published in LIEN has been the cause of some controversy here.

To add to the amusement that one feels in regard to the high sales figures, let's take a look at the price tag on comics: The standard 32-page TINTIN title now sells for DM 1.20 (44¢). The larger 52-page comics cost DM 1.50 (55¢). For the kind of money the books are usually printed on paper that is of a higher quality than that used in the U.S.

For an explanation of the high sales figures...for more on LIEN and on other comics published in Germany be sure to join in for the next episode of WOLF'S OLD WORLD REPORT in the next issue of Rhetoric!

Continued next issue.

BEST-ANALYSIS CONT.

chewked chirrrup from a rudely-awakened nesting sparrow.

Inside lay the garment of opal and saffron. The meticulously embroidered silver-chest insignia with its flamboyant "M" sparkled before his eyes.

The crimson cape, the blackened boots, the mauve mask all lay beneath. He knew without looking.

With a slam, he slung down the cover. He was no longer laughing. His long, pallored fingers beat a tattoo softly against the closed lid.

He felt like a kite out of control. One bereft of hand and string. No emotion; that was the solution.

Straightening himself, he breezed the room to sit in silent ponderousness at his desk. In his mind, he began to prepare the answers to those questions that would almost certainly be asked during tomorrow's interview.

He thought again of the costume hidden within the chest. But this time he smiled for he was once more in complete control.

"Hoi" he said, half aloud, "if you can't make it as a super-hero; you can always be a psychiatrist."

And laughing, he noted this thought among others that were to follow.

BRITISH FANDOM CONT.

of fans who want to buy and find about obscure comics; whereas, if a general fanzine is handled properly, it should always interest the strictely comics fans.

Now I should mention the six or seven fanzines that come out regularly in Great Britain. Eligibility for inclusion in this list is 1) at least one issue so far this year and 2) the magazine having at least four issues per year. (I am not going to list any British fanzines which each fanzine will have it's own six/sen mail review, so, if you're interested, I'm sure that you'll enquire.)

FANTASY ADVERTISER: This is Britain's original zine, the one that started the whole ball rolling over here. It's almost three years under the editorship of Frank Arnold and was born as a fairly zine. As is TCH-sized (and there's no reason to change now) it usually runs 30- 50 pages in length. And it is cheap, too. The address is Jer Skinz, 116 Western Road, Scole, Yorks, England.

SKITHE: I haven't seen many copies of this edition, but it's worth mentioning, as it has been around for quite some time, is well organised, but it generally has less pages. The address is Douglas Stafford, 15 Bourne Avenue, Southgate, London N14.

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Well, why are we gathered here today? Ironically in my writing I'm forced away from making critisisms on current stuff, and lead towards trying to convey my historical perspective for viewing the subject of comics. Plenty of fans have opinions on the latest FANTASTIC FOUR and SWAMP THING, but among us there is no solid and broad-based ground for discussion of what is the shortest. Jim Starosko has done a bang-up job in his historical filing us in on the "what happened" of comics and pretty rightly limits the scope of his book to that end. But no book yet has been heavy on why comics exist, what needs brought them about, the significance of their integration into the culture, and where they are going--if anywhere. Consequently, everybody is entitled to feel they know what comics are "supposed to be". My article on TERZAH in Steranko number 2 where I stated my own prejudices (without being generated enough) was set to Push reader feedback which I was delighted to get. It's always fun to know what other folks think comics "are supposed to be".

There certainly is a lot of confusion on the issue. The general public can be divided into two camps: those who hold that pieces at the sight of a comic book, arguing that it's junk and never read anything more than junk, junk, junk, and those that have some definite sympathy for the medium (read nostalgia in most cases). So who cares about the first group?...The second group, that's us, likes to argue about what comics are all about and most fans belong to one of two camps: those that perceive comics as primarily a literary medium whose pictures are subordinate to textand those who view comics as primarily a visual medium where words are subordinate to pictures.

The champions of the comics, as a literary form, tend to be critics of despair. They give comics alibs hope for ever being a meaningful form of self-expression because of the inherent shortcomings in words and pictures. At best, they will consent to an uneasy living together. The champions of comics as a visual form are into the expressive power of pictures, novels already a pure form or at least as pure as film; other medium that employs both words and pictures.

The actual evidence for either case is slight. You can't really learn from Steranko's histories, the great multitude of comics are always back jobs by the most dispirited and lackluster talents in commercial art. The guiding talents are few and far between. The visually oriented fans are stuck with pointing to comics of 20 years ago and prior to Barks and Kurtzman. While the literary fans have had nothing greater to point to than Charles Biro's crime comics until recently. Now they can point to Thomas' adaptations for Marvel which are even commercially successful, for God's sake!

How can we begin to resolve such strife? Is there any place we can get to in our thinking from where matters can be seen in a true light? Yeah... Right now I feel the emergence of the significant tendencies that will determine the outcome. Assessing popular media requires a dynamic concept of culture. The one is the reflection of the other. Both are constantly changing. Let us enter in with some questions. Where do comics place in our culture today? Is there a need for comics to emerge as a key medium at any future time? Or are they already past tense and ripe for getting to a point where we need to brush up on our

cultural background. Let's go on a rundown of historical trends and see who salutes.

The most significant aspect of history for thinking about comics, and correct me if I'm wrong, is that our culture is in the process of acquiring new techniques for understanding. Collectively we are learning to discard the old tools and learn to use, and have faith in, more sophisticated tools. What is be specific, we are switching from intellect and reason to feeling and emotion. In the 1700s, during the French Enlightenment, we reached a climax of skill implementing intellect, reason, empirical data, and scientific analysis as tools to understanding the universe. The arts associated with the Age of Reason: Newton, Voltaire, Condorcet are all dead now and best forgotten. When the arts are subverted to media histories is the forms their language took. Words and words grew incrementally took the form of treatises, essays, polemics, correspondence, novels-- to sum up-- literature.

Since that climax, man, ever on the move, has been moving away from things concentrated in the head, toward things sensating, the body and spirit, try to imagine the significance of moving from physics to psychology, intellectualization to feeling, static state to movement and you will begin to see the trend. Again as media historians we observe the new forms created by these new tools. The movement from literature to science fiction should be apparent. It occurred mainly in this century. H.G. Wells and Julienne Verne unheaval in his more passionate science fiction novels. The 1890's knew memorably: A Dream of Armageddon and the Life of Picture Puzzle the most turbulent years of transition.

Is it possible to pin down the substance of this crucial transition? I think so. Let's try. Obviously there has been a major shift in the forms of expression. This can be explained by technology. Cameras, tape and movie cameras and movie projectors in the 18th century. All they had was quill pens and paper. But technology too is only a reflection of what is going on in the total environment. The new contrast of shifting media can best be seen in the light of changing needs. Words and pictures have their own unique communicative strengths that make each more or less appropriate vehicles depending on what needs are paramount. Perhaps we had best pin down the contrasting strengths of words and pictures first.

The communicative strength of words is in their capacity to structure cut feelings separately and to end in quite an orderly line. This way, complexity can be broken down systematically into component parts for leisurely analysis. The total experience can be reconstructed by putting the components up and reading the sum.

The communicative strength of pictures is in their inherent organicness. Pictures, with their multitude of effects making place simultaneously for clarity, vagueness, overlapping and many confused impressions, can communicate directly a depth and emotional intensity that one cannot hope to how actually experience life.

This brings us back to what actual need caused words to be displaced by pictures as the major form of expression. Quite simply the answer must be found in the type of audience that more naturally express after we examine life in the mass of people become better educated and develop more and more sophisticated forms grow also.

We are still in transition. The trend is for more and more shifting heirarchy of mass media. Media that were strongholds of the literary past are gradually being superceded by media strongholds of the visual future: universities to work study programs, novels to movies, newspapers to TV, books to magazines, novels to comics. The last ten years we have certainly gained momentum. Documentary, experimentivity training, contemporary music, R.A.D. training are very necessary forms pointing the way from literal/ objective styles towards visual/ subjective reality.

In addition to all the above conditions comics are undergoing another upheaval. Only in the last couple years have they caught up to the present after being fettered to the world past for 25 years. So now we can see side by side comics that represent both ends of the spectrum of transition; comics that are tied to the literary past and comics that are to the visual future. Hence, CONAN and SARGON.

Personal letters invited: Tom Orensimes, 4624 Chester Ave. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19143. 13

COME INTO THE FIRMAMENT, O CONAN IMITATORS

PAUL GRIGGS

This time around we're going to take a quicker, perhaps even deliberately inadequate, look at some of the more widely known and popular imitations (or inspired competitors?) of Robert E. Howard's CONAN the Cimmerian. Now, if some (probably all) of the characters and books which are about to be examined are not exactly new to your experience--well, don't blame me! The editor of this pamphlet wanted me to review characters and books that were drenched in popularity--besides (says he), this is supposed to be a character study of various sword & sorcery heroes and not a real review anyway. And since the readers of this pamphlet probably never picked up a book that was devoid of pictures in their entire lives, and since they probably won't read your review anyway, why worry? (Editor's Note: Only kidding, folks! Heh-heh!)

Now, let us consider one THONGOR the barbarian, the creation of one Lin Carter. Several of Mr. Carter's THONGOR books have been reissued by Ballantine, not too long ago, but one of these was "The Wizard of Lemuria", which was to start THONGOR And The Wizard of Lemuria for this new revised edition. This novel is rather interesting, exciting, crudely colorful, and to describe it's plotline, one could say that it concerns a Homeric hero in a wasted, Cimmerian situation with overtones of Burroughsian description about it, Mr. Carter himself (in his introduction, "Thongor Of The Lemurians", Ace Books, 1971, Pg. 12) sums up to a point, has adhered to.

The plot: THONGOR, a mercenary soldier, finds he's the only of Thurdis after killing his commanding officer, and from there tangles with a few monstrosities in a rather horrible jungle. He then encounters a wizard who has a mission for him, pits him against a few more beasts, including adventures with the hands of Numanorr, rescues Princess What's-Her-Name from the Bad Guy, and finishes off the really bad Bad Guy with a magic sword.

Neat, huh? Original, huh? Not really, but who cares? The plot's still not a bad job. Everyone it follows a little too closely along the lines of the classic sword & sorcery epics, but Mr. Carter doesn't have his Howard and Burroughs and manages to produce a neat adventure in their tradition. You even get caught up in the sheer guess of a fan imitating the masters---though, as mentioned before, perhaps too closely. Even though this novel was the first to be published by experienced Mr. Carter, many of the characters and descriptions in imitation went into it rather than into the original Howard. This, nevertheless, its still a pretty good effort, worth at least a look from any insatiable sword & sorcery fan.

Mr. Carter includes at the end of the novel a time-chart of the major events that took place in the fantasy world he has created--though this is a bit vague, especially to those who have not read the later books in the series yet.

Mr. Carter's second THONGOR novel, "THONGOR of Lemuria", changed to THONGOR and The Dragon City for this revised edition, seems to have little more variety than the previous one. Once more, we find him jumping around between menaces and monsters in a hundred-page novel, and the whole thing moves very fast so that you almost don't notice that you've seen some of this stuff before. This is a rather good adventure, rich in action and color--though lacking other strengths.

THONGOR and friend encounter sea-dragons, cannibal trees, and beastmen before they are captured by the Bad Guys. From there THONGOR finds himself opposite a lurgous and torturer, and a giant (and very hideous) worm before escaping and getting involved with another bad guy who needs an army--one of those wonderful lost cities. Then our barbarian gets mixed up time to time, runs off the other Bad Guy with the aid of a magical ring, and then marries Princess What's-Her-Name.

In this one,Mr. Carter pays ultra nice homage to Howard (the encounter with the giant sea-serpent--any Robert E. Howard fan will tell you where that comes from) and Burroughs (the Lost City of Gom with its walking dead men and mad genius).

Also included at the back of this novel is a glossary of Lemurian words--really an ultra small textbook that fills us in on some of the weird creatures, plants, races,and even customs that THONGOR the Barbarian Warrior, tangles with on the decidedly hostile continent of Lemuria. The many of the words and terms are to be found in the novel itself, and when THONGOR has a fight with a dragon or something we have no need for further elaboration to tell us that it is a dragon. But Mr. Carter's own delight with the imaginary world he has created is passed on to us by way of these "notes" to be subsequently perused at will and they do inject some verisimilitude into the scheme of things--besides whetting our appetites for more of the same. Something about capsule descriptions of exotic things makes them even more exotic probably because the impression we receive is vague--and we want more. And of course Mr. Carter does go on to create more adventures for THONGOR, presumably adding new bits of detail and grist to his Lemurian world and elaborating on what he has already produced--though I have never gotten around to reading these other adventures, mainly because they are a bit difficult to obtain. So you'll just have to wait to get around to them, like a good Lemurian barbarian has--or better yet, track them down yourself...

As for THONGOR...as for a character study of the fellow... that is what Heroic fantasy heroes are not noted for their introvertive contemplation. They are men of action, and what better comment can I make about THONGOR of Lemuria than that he has seen his share of action--and is not particularly outstanding among his heroic barbarian brethren. But at least THONGOR is right up there with the best of them--crusty, courageous, resourceful, efficient, and endowed with an uncanny ability for stumbling upon menace after deliciously grotesque menace. Would you want it any other way?

Next we must consider the adventures of BRAK the barbarian, in BRAK THE BARBARIAN VERSUS THE SORCERER (Paperback Library). Brak, as usually enough, does encounter a vile sorceress--- not to mention a supernatural (and cute vicious) dog by the name of Scorpiethaw (my relation to the ITCHIBABY LOOKIAW). From there he battles something called a mensarus, is attacked by bats in the sorceress' dungeons, and in the end succeeds in destroying the sorceress (and pet) and in thwarting the plans of that evil god of menace, You-Sagoth-ra.

THONGOR is Copyright (c) 1973 by Lin Carter

You, yes, sounds familiar enough, but this one moves pretty swiftly and is nicely inventive. It is all fast-moving and how long the old heroic fantasy plots can be reworked into something new and exciting--- providing you have an author, such as John Jakes, the creator of BRAK, doing the reworking. The manuscript seems to challenge the notion idea is the old man vs. monster bit, is by translating and materially fleshing it out. Several passing, interesting characters for BRAK to overcome and fight but never strained sensationalism or strange and characters make a good adventure.

The next BRAK adventure, BRAK THE BARBARIAN VERSUS THE BEAK OF EVIL HORNS (also from Paperback Library), is an excellent follow-up to the one mentioned above. In this one BRAK encounters a pair of sinister twins, a caravan filled with stock yet interesting characters, a supernatural supernatural-vampire force that is whittling down the numbers of the caravan, desert raiders whose custom is to gouge out an eye when they reach manhood and replace it with a ruby, a supernatural giant with the

rushes for eyes, and a pulse-pounding climax that makes up for this BEAK novel not having a Frazetta cover like the last one.

In this novel Mr. Jakes has provided us with some of the classic heroic fantasy ideas—but served in a cloak of rich inventiveness. The simple episodic storyline has a force to it which pulls you along, pulls you deeper into the delicious-ly sadistic goings-ons. The somewhat familiar story has a vitality almost equal to that possessed by BEAK himself—Mr. Jakes' skillful control of his novel ensures that. The suspense, when the storyline calls for it, is ever huge but holds up like a steel bar due to the meticulous but swift detail in the setting up such moments of danger. Yes, yes, we have here a great skill weaving a strangely simple but wild tapestry.

FAFHRD and THE GRAY MOUSER are Copyright (c) 1973 by NPP

Next we come to the adventures of FAFHRD and the GRAY MOUSER, Fritz Leiber's unique and strangely lovable sword and sorcery heroes. We're going to take a look at the second book in Ace's FAFHRD and the MOUSER series, SWORDS AGAINST DEATH. The only one, believe it or not, I've been able to find. Now I will name each of the ten stories contained in this volume one by one—with an ulterior short description of the plot. I do this in order to give you a proper idea of what is going on in this unique world, and in order to run up my word count.

I- THE CIRCLE CURSE—In which FAFHRD and the MOUSER try to forget the dead girl friends by traveling Leiber's version of the Orient. Nehwon in two pages of a twelve page story.

II- THE JEWELS IN THE FOREST— In which the heroes are after a jewel, sure which is guarded by a really unique sentinel.

III- THIEVES' HOUSE- FAFHRD and the MOUSER battle the thieves of Lankmar for possession of the jeweled skull of Ghaphal.

IV- THE HIDDEN TEMPLE- Of the curious way in which our heroes are ridded by evil powers.

V- THE HOWLING TOWER— Our heroes meet an old sorcerer who is not by fear— and many ferocious spirits.

VI- THE SUNKEN LAND— FAFHRD and the MOUSER encounter a sea-hag and some horrors from the ocean floor.

VII- SEVEN SHALL SURVIVE— The heroes stumble upon a great treasure and its seven deadly protectors.

VIII- CLAWS FROM THE NIGHT-Remember Hitchcock's The Birds...?

IX- PRICE OF PALE-Hah! This time our heroes take on Death personified.

X- BAZAAR OF THE BIZARRE- FAFHRD and the MOUSER vs. the Sorcerers and their little Shop of Junk...

The plots Mr. Leiber provides for his heroes are basically the classic sword and sorcery stuff— but said plots, human into complete stories, often do not appear so familiar. The reader has to dig at Leiber's style— his wonderful, satirical, delightfully imaginative style. This style permeates each story on all its levels— plot, characterization, background, narration, etc.— and pulls us along into his fine world of Nehwon. Yet at the same time we are pulled into the stories, we still possess a kind of detachment, a kind of feel for, even to FAFHRD and the MOUSER, no matter how "human" they may be. And, perhaps it is because of Mr. Leiber's style that the stories are complete (to his characters) but tongue in-cheek pieces nevertheless. Anyhow, the finished stories are small gems possessing a unique quality.

Aside from the fact that FAFHRD is a coarse barbarian and the MOUSER a shrewd, slippery rascal, I think I've pinpointed the uniqueness, the fragile exotic quality that makes these so delightful to sword & sorcery readers. Leiber's style is what makes the stories, but FAFHRD and the MOUSER are made lifelike and entertaining by a sense of humor. Yes, that's it, a sense of humor. Even other sword and sorcery heroes have no severance in the per-

CONT. ON PG. 82

Duffy's Tavern

DUFFY VOHLAND, PROPRIETOR

Uh...it's so again. Sorry I missed last ish (I am--you're probably not) hopefully it won't happen again. (It'd better not--people are beginning to think of the Real Adams of Fandom". Not because of any artistic ability I might have; rather, because I'm constantly missing deadlines!)

(Shut up--nobody heard that!) I mean is it a sin of some sort to buy Charlton comics? It would seem so, the way some people talk! Anyway, I've got a couple ideas on how to improve the fan-status of "the company that nobody knows".

Of course, it was great when Dick Giordano was editor and they were publishing their super-hero mags. Now, however, I just buy their mystery titles. They aren't bad--but they're not that great, either. Something in one of the more recent back-issues (GHOST) --has read "stimulated my imagination," and I'm hoping it's more than just idle talk on their part. To get into the thing, I'd like to quote a portion of one of the LoC's in #3's "Bridwight Mail" column and the editor's subsequent reply:

"How about some super- heroes? During the short time, I really enjoyed the new BLUE BEETLE and the QUESTION. Super-heroes are the only thing your company is missing."

Sincerely,
Randy Hespe'

To which they replied:

"Okay, Randy, so we have to admit, you're not the first of our readers to ask us about super-heroes. Charlton wants to give you all what you enjoy and demand; therefore we promise to work on it."

Now, while I'm not sure of the sincerity of their answer,at least it's a step in the right direction. Secondly, I've got a couple suggestions as to who they should revive and all:

1. SPOOKMAN- In all probability, there are very few of you who remember this character. That's understandable, though,since his only appearance was in the start of a short story in the first ish of the long defunct CHARLTON PREMIERE. The premise of the strip went something like this:

In his real-life identity, SPOOKMAN was sort of a rich soldier of fortune who charged exorbitant prices to locate valuable antiques and objects d'art for clients. How what he didn't tell them is that he travel back into time to the period when the objects were originally made! He accomplished this by the use of a mystic medallion (see ills) which also transformed him from a normal looking man (as "normal-looking" as a man could be with Pat Boyette drawing him, that is) to the hideous creature known as SPOOKMAN. (Anybody getting secret yet?) His strength and powers were never actually explained but all of them was relatively easy to figure out.

ABOVE: Unknown to Duffy at the time he wrote this installment of "DV", Charlton already has a new super-hero book in the works, E-MAN!

I think the time-traveling aspect of this strip could make for some very good adventures. And, of course, because of the mystical

overtones, and SPOOKY's "ridiculous" looks, the series would most likely sell on today's weird-oriented market.

2. NIGHTSHADE- I think NIGHTSHADE, Patty and Bette Midler are my three favorite females; so naturally I'd like to have them around all the time! I think I've come up with a way to get at least one of'em NIGHTIE (think about that nickname!) in a strip of her own- and make it saleable. (I don't think Fandom could stand a book called "The Life and Loves (The VISION, NIGHTIE, MS. SPOOK,...) of Patty"; it'd probably be crosier than FLOP!).

Anyway, as you may or may not remember, NIGHTIE (there it is again!) originally came from another dimension. (Her origin was never completely revealed; so that could be the first "assignment" for the writer.) And, there were all sorts of hints in her old strip (er, as in series, that is...) about all the nemeses and such that were lurking in her home-world-dimension. So, can you imagine how all the little kiddies would flock (well, maybe not flock, exactly...) to the stands to buy her book if they saw all kinds of monsters and wet-nasties all over the covers? Of course you can!

Oh, and since Jim Aparo (who drew her old solo...uh...feature, as you may recall), seems to be more than happy at DC, Charlton could have Joe Staton draw the series. He seems to have a very...er...unusual style that would suit NIGHTIE's (Arghl) otherworld background beautifully.

3-5) Then they could also try

BELOW: Gary Keto and Duffy Vohland's rendition of SPOOKMAN.

turning CAPTAIN ATOM into a planet-hopper, encountering all sorts of weird civilizations in his many travels. "Or, revive the QUESTION and somehow make him into a "GREEN STRANGER/mysterious type character. "Or, revive HERCULES as a sword & sorcery strip. "Or,...but I think you get the idea.

So, if you like any of these ideas, or have others you think are as good or better, I'd like to hear from you. And I'd also like to see let Charlton know, naturally. (Otherwise, they're going to think I'm the only better chance there'd be of their actually publishing some super-hero stuff.)

Wow! To say the response to my SUPER-STARS feature #1 was good would be putting it mildly. Thanx, people and fans, all right! I've received some comments from a couple of peopl that I think you'll find worth reading:

Len Wein-"That bit about my killing off one of the JLA members was apt to be my comment at a convention and I said I might think about it--but by a good WORLD GREEN character the hero to perish. That dude is my absolute favorite alive and I've never wouldn't be the same without him. As for looking for anybody else--I don't doubt it. For one, Julie Schwartz would probably kill me if I did. For two, I really like all the JLA-ers (in one degree or another) and it'd miss them if they went. "Kill HAL JORDAN and replace him with JOHN STEWART? The idea is interesting and has some merit. I, for one, would like to see more black heroes up on the mountain, but I'm not really in a position at the moment to investigate it fully without creating all sorts of complications: i.e. Ed's new policy to keep continuity on the FLASH. Is there enough space in such a format to support an entirely new personality (STEWART's) and make the readers at large accept him without sacrificing the "required" number of appearances in each story? Remember, the personality of HAL JORDAN has taken better than 2 years to firm itself up, and that was with a full book published eight times a year for most of the period. Second, I really love the way Gardner and Adam throw the JLA-ers characters. That I might do it? I can convince Julie (and Murray with me) is inexpressible JORDAN for an 18A and an EXPERT RIFLEMAN. Maybe we can let reader-reaction dictate our directions from there. Hurry, by the way, no ANIMAL MAN in the JLA but I am thinking about using him somehow.."

Jim McCann- About your GREEN LANTERN suggestions: It never HURTS to remember that you propose killing off GL. It doesn't bother me that you propose replacing him with JOHN STEWART -I think he's about time we had a black super-hero anyway! No, what does bother me is that DC would handle such a character.

"With a few notable exceptions, (HENRY ALDRICH, GLADA), DC is not known for their character development. If DC handled JOHN STEWART the same way they're currently handling most of their male super-heroes, I'd say forget it! [I'd rather not have a book come out.] The mere fact that JOHN STEWART would be a black superhero would not make the book, as you said, 'unique'--it'd be unique only as it is concerned. I would consider it a put down, token, tokenism on DC's part. We have enough of that already!

"If you stop and think about it, if such a book came out and all it had going for it was the 'black bit', I don't think it would deserve the support of the readers and it would probably fail. You see my phrase that: It would probably fail as far as the black community is concerned. Why? Well, let me give you an example:

"You get recall the 'Julia' program on TV of a few years back? Well, that show failed in the black community because it failed to truly reflect the world as seen thru the eyes of a black woman. You never saw Julia with curlers in her hair while cleaning house; she spoke proper English at all times; she was always surrounded by her friends, etc. Actually all 'Julia' represented was your typical white middle-class woman, the only difference being the 'color bit.'

"Sanford And Son", on the other hand, enjoys a very high rating and it is enjoyed by all the black people I know who watch it. It and it tells it like it is. They get down, man!

"Back to the subject at hand. Marvel is making a good showing with their black superheroes: LUKE CAGE, the BLACK PANTHER, and LUKE CAGE.

"The writing on LUKE CAGE is

pretty good, although I was a lot of room for improvement. With the first issue of Issues, Archie Goodwin put down a good solid effort but we have Englehart has taken over, the quality of the stories has gone down.

"Another point to consider besides the writing (in any attempt to produce a quality book) is the artwork; i.e. the artwork. Let's face it, Mr. Kane, Adams' art is uneven. Mr. CAGE is a second-rate book. You can always tell by the artwork, and the artwork on LC leaves a lot to be desired. Now you imagine how good the book would be if it was drawn by, say, Neal Adams? George Tuska just doesn't (and probably never will) draw likable people realistically. Take any white person drawn by Tuska, color his face green (or muddy green, as in the most recent issue (#10) of CAGE), draw curly no his head and--Presto!--instant black man!

"I think you would agree with me on the point that most writers can not draw all types of strips. For instance, one writer might be good on humor, but no good on horror, etc. Unless Marvel and DC should start asking themselves this question more often--namely: Is this artist right for the strip?

"Anyway, despite its short comings, I still think IRON FIST has a lot more to offer than just the 'Kung fu' - All of which brings us back to GI and DC. Who would write the series? Who would draw it? What would be the direction of the character? These are questions that would have to be dealt with beforehand.

"As I've said before, sure I'd like to see DC with a black superhero strip, but not something that's thrown together in haphazard manner to make a buck or simply because of the novelty of it.

"Only when DC or Marvel lavish the care and attention on their black super-heroes that they do on CONAN or DRAKU THING will we get a book that we can all be proud of."

Whew! Jim really knocked me over with his LoC----which was 11 handwritten pages long in total. I made some good points and a couple that I didn't quite agree with. Like: a-

There are only so many artists of the caliber of Adams in comics. And, they can handle only so many titles. Remember, I put GI Joe on the market that have to be drawn by someone. I have said this title was Steve Englehart's weakest book. It'd rather see his tackle IRON MAN. ;) George Tuska doesn't seem anybody's favorite artist. His art has long been characteristic lookalong---whether intentional or not.

And, of course, I was very happy, to say the least, to read Darrell Hetz's comments (even if Howard Siegel and I are the only two people that want to see ANIMAL MAN revived--or so it seems).

I guess that brings us to the end of another Duffy's Tavern. (I can hear all the groans now.) As always, I want to hear from all of you about anything and everything! And Mr. Let's see if it increases my number of responses by printing my address at the end of this thing. Hokay?)

So, let me leave you with this final thought: "Good morning. Have you used Reers' Soap"

PAX! And up your A-MAN!

Duffy Vehland
165 Center Street
East Liverpool, Ohio
43920.

CONAN IMITATORS CONT.

CONAN and his horde of fellow barbarians though aren't when they're fighting, and they're almost always fighting. But involved in this sense of humor that's present in some of the joyful clash of their different personalities is a sense of humanness. I would often have some other barbarian or sword-and-sorcery HERO CONAN on an adventure, but it was obvious that CONAN was the star from the first. FAFHRD and the MOUSER both share the spotlight; they're a good team. But perhaps they wouldn't be so enjoyable on their own... Hmm... Yes, I think Leiber wrote a few stories about FAFHRD and the MOUSER before they met... Yes, I think those stories might be found in the first volume in the series released by BALLANTINE AND DEVILTRY. Yes. I definitely worth lookinh into... If I can find that elusive volume...

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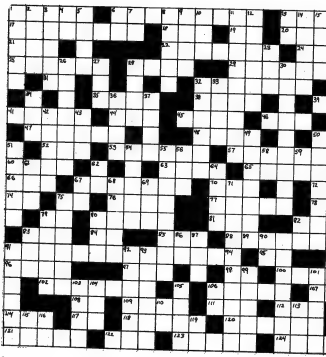
by BOB ROZAKIS



ACROSS

1 Martha's maiden name
6 Peter Parker
13 Thor's brother
17 Cowboy Cassidy
18 Tom Fagan's night
19 Bond foe
20 POOM is one
21 Captain Carter
22 Blind doctor
24 South Long Island (ab)
25 Blackhawk base
26 Clown
29 Captain, Mary, & Jr.
31 Fiction detective's initials
32 Hare with stellar rod
35 Selina Kyle's pets
___ Moley!
39 Reed, Ben & Co. (ab)
41 Lord of Black Land
42 Batman won't use one
43 What Superp protects Lois from
46 Where heroes fly
47 Salad vegetable
48 Ark builder
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52 Mr. Palsey
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57 Spectre's job in his last issue
60 Trumpet
63 Radio station owner
65 Planet editor
66 Yoko
67 Hawkeye & Super-heroes
& Neck
72 Marvel Editor (ab)
74 About
75 Therefore
76 Overwhelming defeat
77 Mr Brant's fiances
78 ___botman
79 ___arkton Comics
80 Barsoonian lion
81 clever
82 Katar
83 One of Hulk's four
"Do___ I do..."
85 Journey ___Mystery
88 Comes in
91 Cap's furie (2 wds)
95 Exclamation
96 Fantasy author
97 Thanks come from it
98 Mr Sinder's initials
99 Adventure___Fear
102 Dc hero/Marvel villain
106 Mr Wayne
___ vay!
108 Rubert ass't (ab)
109 Door to heaven
111 Kooki
112 Moving truck
114 Floor cleaner
115 Superman ___ Action
116 Spot
118 Strange
121 Cap's foe
122 Turkish hat
123 Mr O'Neil
124 Stain

DOWN

1 Mr Chance
2 Reporter Lane
3 Gramma's piss
4 Sargent
5 Ku Klux ___
6 Mr Super Carr
7 Pro Golfers (ab)
8 Stringer
9 Villainous
10 Tornado
11 "Odo Strange Adv. hero
12 ___ phibia
13 Hero for Rire initials
14 Superman's pal
15 King of Atlantis
16 Invisible magician
23 Long___ goodbye
27 King of the Sea
28 Clark Savage Jr
30 Schwartz sci-fi mag
33 Horse sibena
34 The Time-Devil
36 Trevor's sidekick
37 Greg Nelson
38 The sailor (2 wds)
39 Miss White
40 Mr or Clay-
44 The Spanish Fox
45 Golden Age hero
49 Once Goliath
51 Mr horror (2 wds)
54 Mitey
55 Love god
56 Ted Sallie
58 Mr Scott's
59 Blood factor
61 Men ___ work
62 Single
64 Mr Bridwell
65 ___ and behold
68 Lawn
69 Ooh
71 Torch's foe
73 Writer in Cresilin's home land
75 Land of the Dragons
79 Change
80 Not good
82 Him
83 Conan ___ Barbarian
86 No good (ab)
87 Metal Man
89 Not yes
90 Nemesis
91 Johnny and Sue
92 Alice ___ Wonderland
93 Krazy's friend
94 Batman's police pal
99 Chum
101 Keno Sabey's friend
103 Tack
104 The elder Mr. Reid
105 Act
107 ___ware the Monsters!
110 Robin, Speedy, et al (ab)
113 Cleopatra's snake
115 Alright
116 Smelly
119 About
ANSWERS IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF ETCETERA.

The Wandering FAN

TONY ISABELLA

For several weeks now, ever since I promised Paul Kupperberg that I'd start contributing a regular column to Etcetera, Jandon's answer to Isaac Lund has been nagging me. "Who are you gonna call it? The Wandering Fool?"

Nope.

I'm still very much a fan, people. I still collect any bad writing or current issue comics, even more so when it is a title Marvel publishes. I still think pretty much the way I did when I was in Cleveland. (However, it must be noted that I was more to-the-point as editor, friend, and a fine person in his own right, Roy Thomas--a bit more commercially-minded than most fans. Working for the best selling line of comics in the world has given me more insight into the field, but basically, I haven't changed. I'm still a fan, and we'll have no more silliness about the title of this column. Hi. Let's get on with the article.

OK, it should be mentioned, in expecting the first part in a two-issue article on the British weekline I produce for Stan Lee. Or, at least, an introspective analysis of my various writings for professional comics, magazines, and (shudder!) agencies. Wrong scenario, gentlemen.

For no reason, other than I've just spent a half an hour discussing it with friend Roy Killian, I'm going to write about the longest running gripe-subject in the history of comics... Julie Schwartz's JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA.

(With that sentence, it should be known, I've hooked the attention of Len Wein. Len has publicly professed my life because of a crack I made about his Lon Cortello voice in TALES OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD. Why a guy with a wife like Glynis cares about his scouskey voice I don't know, but I'm a firm believer in "getting them before they get you." Harv Wolfman, take notice.)

(In case you haven't been paying attention, by the way, I've dropped four issues and wasted 304 words just getting to the meat of this column.)

I like the JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA and its predecessor, the JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA. However, the JSA had one advantage over the JLA. Subsequent super-heroes were usually shipped out as soon as they overstayed their welcome. Thus far, the JLA has been far too lenient in handing out working papers. Basically, I am going to do a very few-type thing and run down the JLA membership roster and tell you which characters I think should be given the intergalactic ax.

AQUAMAN- I like AQUAMAN. Really. In my estimation, Dick Giordano, Steve Skeates and Jim Aparo made this character a top contender for the first and only time in his career. But he's so out-of-place in a land situation. I'd restrict his appearances to occasional guest shots. And not just in the JUSTICE LEAGUE.

THE ATOM- This is one hero I grew tired with after about five issues. My interest revived briefly in two-issue times. Gur Fox and Denny O'Neil did some good stories in the ATOM. And I absolutely loved MAJOR HYTAH. But he's no good people. Period. I can bet the guy with a well placed rubber boot. Which means I'm content to say JLA--JLA pretty, that's it! The first panel I'd have this fella in floor will reduce him to ATOM-spit!

HAWKMAN- "THE" BATMAN, as his friends call him, is what I'd like Hawkman to be. Gardner's dedication is quite obvious. He silently portrays the Thanagarian among supermen and he comes out quite likable. He's the character as a serious man, seldom frivolous. The backbone of the JLA.

BLACK CANARY- I'm less than enchanted with this character. She's a dumb broad, too prone to tears. Serious work needs to be done before she shapes up as a good member.

HIGHGATED MAN- I'm sold Len Wein added RALPH DIBNY for some comedy relief. Len, you're overdoing it by being a genius. No other character could work as well in this respect. It's been tried with the ATOM and

SHAYPER CARR and failed. Score one for the Guerilla Supersonaboom!

FLASH- Here's a character who has a power that enables him to do a lot of very exciting visual things. Unfortunately, BARRY ALLEN and the FLASH are both extremely dull people. Really. Try to imagine yourself having a conversation with BARRY ALLEN. He'd bore me to tears! Equally unfortunately, I don't think anything can be done with him. We have this power, though, to find out he's been cheating on Iris. Anything to make him more than a boring Seminex tablet he currently is.

GREEN ARROW- Here's where Len really stops paying attention to everybody because he knows how I feel about this character. To quote Joe Augustine (an Editor): "Would anybody please drive a stake through GREEN ARROW's heart, cut his head off, and stuff the mouth with garlic? Please?" It's my opinion that that's usefulness ended with the conclusion of "And Through the Eyes a Hero". At that point, GREEN ARROW had fully become a thinking, feeling, functioning adult. He no longer needs, nor does the JLA need, to put up with this walking mental basket case. I would advise a stake through the heart, but seeing GA go out in a flash of glory wouldn't bother me at all.

GREEN LANTERN- Another perfect member. Whether the role is filled by HAL JORDAN or JOHN STEWART, both are interesting characters. Both do exciting, visual things. Both rank high among the JLA's favorites.

HAWKMAN- A near-perfect member. HAWKMAN's a very visual character and his use of ancient weapons could be utilized to similar effect. He's intelligent and resourceful.

MARTIAN MANHUNTER- My personal feeling is that JOHN CARTER would make a better JLA member than J'ONZZ. In fact, EDGAR TRICE would make a better JLA member than J'ONZZ. And more visually exciting, to boot.

METAMORPHO- Despite some personal reservation, I feel that the ELONGY MAN would make a good JLA member. He's got an interesting personality and a visual super-power. I hope to see more of him. (Thanks to you, Costello!)

PHANTOM STRANGER- Len handled the STRANGER's first meeting with the JLA perfectly, and, I hope, set the scene for many future meetings. The STRANGER shouldn't appear with the JLA, but should be in evidence occasionally.

RED TORNADO- Sorry, gang, but it has all been done before and better in the STRONGEST. TORNADO is a lackluster character at best. When he was on Earth-2, I thought he was an overplayed member of the JSA. Guess what he is now?

SHAPETR CARR- Yeah, I know he's only an honorary member, but I'd like to see him back, solve his personal problems, and appear more frequently as a supporting member. SHAPER, even at his worst, adds a human element to the JLA.

SUPERMAN- Another one of those perfect members. He's an excellent team man and has the abilities of other members, even though they are physical powers instead of FX. The qualities that have enabled the greatness of SUPERMAN for myriad years of continued mishandling are the qualities that qualify him so admitted to JLA membership.

WONDER WOMAN- There's no evidence that WONDER WOMAN would be a poor JLA member now that her powers have returned. Certainly the Amazonian's current scripts don't indicate it. However, there must be something that has kept this character alive for so many years. I'd like to see discover it, the AMAZON PRINCESS would be a colorful and welcome addition to the JLA.

For the most part, Len Wein-Dennis's choices for membership are making a brilliant job on the JUSTICE LEAGUE. He's found the right mix in the book. He's done some very interesting things with character characterization. In fact, some bits he's got in the book- "Crisis on Two Earths" -- may even make me like GREEN LANTERN. I doubt it. In fact, I have so much respect for what Len's doing that I won't even suggest the VIGILANTE and SATANA for membership. Because I'm sure he'll get around to it. He might even bring back the GREEN and do him right. Enough compliments directed toward the Wein kid. I wouldn't want him to start thinking he has to faults. After all, there is still that matter of the Costello voice. Who's on first, Len?

(Continued-on-time: Len does not really have a Lou Costello voice. It just happened to be the first thing that came to me. Also, remember that when he was writing the BROTHER VOO-DOO series. So cut him some

CONT. ON PG. 32

LUNACON-1973

LUNACON '73

APRIL 20-22

con report

BY ROBERT McWALTERS

LunaCon 1973 was scheduled to open at 12:00, but, in reality, it opened closer to 2:00. Unlike most conventions, registration took only a period of about five minutes.

The opening panel was called How Do You Draw The Line Between SF And Fantasy? It was moderated by Fred Lerner and had Virginia Carew, Veronica R.S. Kennedy, William R.F. Kennedy, and Sanford Zane Meschkow. All have a high degree in English, one is an Assistant Professor of English, another served 10 years as an editor for Junk and Magnalls, but all in all, the discussion was quite boring, mainly because it consisted of an argument in semantics.

The next panel was headed by John J. Pierce and was titled Criticism. Mr. Pierce has published the fanzine Ranjiessence for the past four years and is a reviewer for Locus Monthly. At this event, members of the audience were invited to suggest the names of authors or titles of stories, and Mr. Pierce made comment on those familiar to him.

Next, at around 4:30, Harlan Ellison, who, I might add, was the guest of honor for this year's convention, read from his work in a panel appropriately titled Harlan Ellison Reads From His Works. The main point of this panel, to me, was to try to see into his personality and I must say what I saw seemed quite pleasant. He appeared to be a trifle temperamental, but in a way that seemed both good and bad.

Nothing on the agenda until around 11:30, at which time a Meet the Authors Party was scheduled where both hard and soft drinks were sold. It was quite good, although I must admit I would have enjoyed it better if it was Comic Con-Meet the Authors Party.

The first day had many good points, but then again, it had a number of bad ones. And the second day would prove a little more interesting.

The second day of Lunacon-1973 started smoothly with the first panel at 11:00 called Beyond the Frontiers: Introduction to SF Fantasy Film For Non-Attenders. It was a ten panel discussed by Brian Aldiss with no one attended over 60 SF conventions. Also on the panel were Jon Clement, Elliot Shorter, and Jon Singer. Not the most interesting of panels, but quite informative and good for the newcomers in the audience.

Next came the film called Key Directions in Science Fiction. It was given to the convention courtesy of the University of Kansas and Prof. Gunn, the film's producer. It was a film in which many of Honor Harlan Ellison (who, according to the program book had himself "will be making the film for the first time"). He "conducts a seminar and describes science fiction as a street fiction, a fiction of the people, with a mission and a message, and answers questions." Prof. Gunn and other seminar participants." The film was interesting and funny with Ellison added, unknown to Harlan Ellison, such sub-titles as Harlan took off the top of his head the book Rust Hughes had to be right at 5 hours. I soon commented on it after it was over and mentioned that it was a little out of date (it was originally made in 1970).

At about 2:15, a panel titled Why Has There Never Been A Popular Best-seller in Science Fiction? The panel consisted of Lester del Rey, Harlan Ellison, Leslie A. Fiedler, Barry N. Malzberg, Frederik Pohl, with introductions by Hans Stefan Santesson. It explained why Junk like the Valley of the Dolls can become a bestseller and SF can't. It can be explained in one word, "Promotion", or at least that was the explanation of the people on the panel. To me, however, a much easier explanation would be that the people seem to enjoy garbage.

Look at tv for example. On top of that, the fact that science fiction is categorized as science and fantasy and sword and Harlan Ellison seemed to separate it along the lines of another important reason was that books on a sell better the 10,000 mark on short period of time might be on the bestseller's list, while a book that sells 100,000 over a longer period of time might not be.

The next panel was at 3:45 and it's purpose was to examine Two Courses As One: The SF Mystery. On the panel was such well known figures such as Isaac Asimov, Robert L. Fish, Mary Higgins Clark and Avram Davidson and moderator Hans Stefan Santesson. It discussed the overlap of fiction mystery stories and was quite enjoyable. Except for this goes to the panelists more than the main subject itself.

At 5:00, Hard Look Stories or How to Live to 6:00 A.M. Year was the next panel. It was moderated by Harlan Ellison, and had Jack Gaughan and Dscois, and George Alec Effinger on the panel, itself. The only thing that can be said for it is that it destroyed the myth that all writers are rich.

There was nothing on the official agenda between the hours of 6:00 and 8:00, but they consumed on auction.

At 8:00, A Song of Gods Gone Mad was on and it featured Harlan and songs. Fred Kuhn played the guitar and sang many of Harlan's songs in on guitar and vocal harmonies. The introduction was by Harlan. The first of the songs in the program was "Wonderful Wino", "Please", "The Book Where No Sun Shines", "Mercenaries", and "Elder Days". This is more or less a question of individual taste, but I liked most of the songs.

At 9:00 the evening film program began, and the feature film was the one-hour film version of "Demon With a Glass Hand", which was presented on "The Outer Limits" during the 1964-1965 season. Harlan Ellison wrote the original story and also the script for the show for the con. It was directed by Byron Haskin and "Welcome to the Outer Worlds." Being a s-f fan myself both the episode and the production itself are a whole are remembered by me with a great deal of fondness.

The final day of the 1973 Lunacon began with a First Fandom Panel with Lester Del Rey, Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, and moderator Arthur W. Saha. It was a fairly interesting panel but it could have been better.

At 12:15 the next panel, called the 11th Hour, started, and although I did not attend it personally, it was reported to be very good. It was composed of people who were sure they could attend the convention before the program went to press and had such names as Arthur C. Clarke on it.

The Guest of Honor speech was the next panel on the program, and as mentioned before, Harlan Ellison was the Guest of Honor. He arrived about 15 minutes late and, since Lemo Lamora was scheduled to give the introduction, he handled the panel until Harlan arrived. It was a very good job. When Harlan finally did arrive, he showed he could handle himself in front of a large audience, as well as with a pen and paper. He talked about his family, letters he receives from his fans, and how he was pissed-off at the rumor going around that he was being paid an extra $100 for attending the convention. Not that he was so annoyed at the implication that he was doing this only for the money but because, as usual, it was people's business if he was receiving money. He admitted he was glad he mentioned that the people come to see the "celebrities" and why should he work his butt off for a bunch of strangers to fatten the pockets of some convention organizer? I admire Ellison for his honesty and think he is 100% right. Most of people there do not know him personally and we attend conventions to be entertained. He told a story of people that drop in on him from out of state and ask, "Where's your wife?" When he refused to let them in they would ask him why and he would look at them and say, "Because you steal." An amazing story, itself, but I would not be surprised if it were true. The Guest of Honor speech was quite enjoyable and Harlan Ellison was a perfect choice.

The last panel of the Lunacon was a combination affair under the title of Speculative Fiction. The first part was John J. Pierce reading a satire on the "New Wave". It was called "Nate is a Sandpaper Ice Cube with Pollen Pots of Love On It", by Terry Dixon. It was very good.

The next part was The Author Meets His Critics, where Harlon Ellison was up against Asimov, J. J. Pierce, Baird Searles, Darko Suvin and Fred Lerner. It was interesting, and the critics, if you want to refer to them by that word, came across as quite intelligent men with the exception of Fred Lerner. Besides other things, Mr. Pierce came across as a very likeable character compatible with a fictional character who seems to be a favorite because of the lack of color. (Or condemn of glory because he is to respect for sf.) One of the questions brought up was why does not Harlan Ellison write more sf. Ellison responded he doesn't think he would be so concerned with insignificant things as he seems to be now that he does not believe he could write a good story. All critics did not like the idea that there is a place for a hate in battle of wits with Mr. Ellison for the entertainment of the fans (which seemed to be the main purpose for the panel) but they did disagree with Harlan Ellison and among themselves about certain ideas.

The dealers room of the convention was equipped with everything from recordings of sf shows to comic books and more than enough sf paperbacks. The art room was decent but for a few exceptions there wasn't much to get excited over.

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MARVEL quiz

The quiz below was contributed by Mike Stuntebeck, of St. Paul, Minnesota. I enjoyed it, so I thought that it'd pass it on to you. So here it is—

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

1. SPIDERMAN to the Shocker in "The Sinister Shocker" (1966):

"Your Shocker gimmick won't work if your thumbs don't touch those crazy COSTUME BUTTONS! Right?"

To which the Shocker replied:

A. Wanna bet, big mouth!
B. You're right. I surrender!
C. By Shucks! I can't even then!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

2. RED WOLF in "When Dies / Legend" (1970):

"There is...no hope! But, at least I can die like a WARRIOR!"

After which the SCARLET WITCH replied:

A. Perhaps you need not die at all, RED WOLF!
B. See you around!
C. Not for while we can still get out of here!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

3. The Masked Marauder to DAREDEVIL in "Home are so Blind" (1964):

"My opti-blest never fails!, You can't attack me! It isn't possible!!!"

To which DAREDEVIL replied:

A. Shut up and sonk out like a good little crook!
B. Mister, you talk too much!
C. You don't have to shout!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

4. CAPTAIN AMERICA to Batroc in "30 Minutes to Live" (1965):

"You talk a good fight---but it doesn't pay off the wire, mister"

To which Batroc replies:

A. Tom Du Chien!
B. Ach De Liebuni
C. You'll sing a different tune later, after you are captured!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

5. Karnak to BLACK BOLT in "Those Who Would Destroy Us!" (1965):

"He (the THING) is too strong for you, BLACK BOLT! ...You must use your ELDER MIGHT!"

To which Ken Grimm replies:

A. It won't do anything to me!
B. UHHHH!
C. Master Blow! How can you get?

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

6. The Absorbing Man to THOR in "The Power! The Passion! The Pride!" (1965):

"This will finish you for sure!"

To which THOR says:

A. Not while! these two arms can still wield the power of THOR!
B. I will not give up till my death!
C. Say, Crusher Creel! Not while it misses its target!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

7. The Abomination to the SILVER SURFER in "Father, Ye Witches" (1969):

"So, you're back, huh? You didn't know how lucky you were. But your luck just run out!"

To which the SURFER replies:

A. Not while I have my COSMIC POWER!
B. He lives only to kill! I must stop him!
C. He lives but to kill! With such as he, there can be no mercy...no appeal!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

8. KANG to IRON MAN in "Kang, The Conqueror" (1964):

"You, in the iron suit, just what do you think you're doing?"

To which IRON MAN replies:

A. Showing you how to destroy a ship!
B. I'm searching you for weapons!
C. Just showing you that we in the 20th century aren't the savages you think we are!

****

The answers, incase you were wondering are:

1- C	5- C
2- A	6- A
3- B	7- C
4- B	8- A

If you got them all right (without peeking) well, then you're a better man than me!

Cowboys And Aliens

STEVEN UTLEY

The following article was originally published in Dimdal #2 (Spring, 1971) and is Copyright (c) 1971 by George W. Proctor. Reprinted by permission.

Those great and not-so-great comic book heroes of the Forties and Fifties are virtually extinct by the time the Seventies' fifties got underway. Some, inevitably, had died swiftly, carried under by comic books no longer sold, going down with competitors that could no longer afford the sponsor supreme and vendor woman. Others, the bigger stars that had once been popular enough to appear simultaneously in a number of different books, were less fortunate: their deaths agonies were drawn out for months, even years, at a time as they lost one magazine after another.

A few, unlikely-sort of all, had surely perished of nothing less than humiliation: THE SHIELD, for example, had surrendered the spotlight in FLY to Archie.

It came to the point where one had to sift through HUNDREDS of copies, sf, horror, western, war, love, and humor comics to find one or two of the old superstars: a stench of death was everywhere, and even the last few were threatened with extinction. CAPTAIN MARVEL, who had actually had a revival in the Seconds before, wasted away like a paper doll in wilderness and in comes PLASTIC MAN, CRIMEBUSTER, SUBBY KUBIK and a few others who had survived the Forties were cases for the Humane Society's consideration. A handful of one-time great stars were such as CAPTAIN AMERICA, BLUE BEETLE and the GREEN HORNET were representative of the cvals: SUPERMAN and BATMAN remained popular enough to each sell more than a single comic book at a time.

Despite the obvious fact that readers were simply not interested in the exploits of racing-suited dopsters, certain publishers came out with new superheroes. A second SHIELD (illustrated by Bill Everett, who had been among the boys in the finest artists in the business) and the FIGHTING AMERICAN (Joe Simon and Jack Kirby's enjoyable spoof of their own CAPTAIN AMERICA), might have succeeded had they come along ten years earlier. The rest of the early Fifties' few original creations can only be compared with more recent dogs of monumental proportions, such as B'WANA BEAST, THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD "LUNDAHL SPORTS STORIES" and M.F. Enterprises' hideous mockery of the good name CAPTAIN MARVEL (my gotz you remember when I think about these). Ever eager to lay bodies of the once well-earned dead, comic book publishers have often gone to desperate lengths to attempt ridiculous, extreme. The results in this category are almost unbelievable, being at best feeble attempts to imitate more successful traditional heroes (super and otherwise) into the science-fiction and supernatural stories that were then selling the most comics—Harvey SCORPIO, the Crusader from Mars, MAJOR INAPAK (an ace of space-aces) and Hillman's Powell for the purposes of promoting Ranger, which appears to have been some sort of chocolate cook that one mixed with milk and powdered; CAPTAIN FLASH and HIGH, the PURPLE CLAW, Hillman's even more obscure from television, CAPTAIN VIDEO and TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET.

Oh yes, and SPURS JACKSON.

I swear upon all that I deem holy (KING KONG, Lenny Bruce, and the UNITED STATES ARMY) I do not put that which I am about to relate in not tongue of my cheek nor in my mind. There was a character named SPURS JACKSON who starred in a book called The Space Vigilantes in the unlikely-sounding setting of a hybrid of all time: SPACE WESTERN COMICS. Jackson, ground out six issues of that incredible experience (Nos. 4-5, 6-7 and September/October, 1952 through July/August, 1953). I possess two of these issues and keep them filed with slightly less improbable things as constant reminders of the lengths to which some people will go in order to make money; anyone who disbelieves in the existence of SPURS JACKSON simply has but to excuse me of suffering from the malaise of a fevered imagine, and I will send that individual four consecutive issues of the comic to establish my veracity.

Drawn in an occasionally competent manner by one Stan Campbell (best remembered for his work in LASH LARUE, so Larry Herndon assures me), Hidalgo was a lean, mean, jewed, cleft-chinned Arizona rancher who just happened to have his very own spaceship parked down in the lower forty. Such a fusion of the Wild West and THRILLING WONDER STORIES was not new--a number of short -'em-ups of the Thirties, not the least of them Gene Autry's, had STRATOSM ENSPIES serial (Mascot Pictures, 1934) had been produced in the same idea--nor would the notion be discarded along with SPACE COWBOY and his Space Vigilantes; I refer to the films in which Gene AUTRY'S HOLLOW MOUNTAIN and THE VALLEY OF VANISHING MEN, which pitted cowboys against dinosaurs.

I am personally inclined to believe that the writer or writers responsible for SPACE WESTERN HERO were getting themselves on cold turkey, even lobsters, fat-free diet plans, raw lobsters, fat-free lobsters, but that's pure conjecture. Any watching one of those early broadcasts much closer as are likely to be dreamt following such horror, they get stuck in SPACE, who, though his adventures were set in the future a so-dictated future, dressed like a thirties-style movie cowboy--white, two-gun hat, black shirt, black, sometimes white, depending upon the whim of the artist, neckerchief, studded 'round the neck, crimson shirt with fringed-yoke business on the sleeve, blue cowboy breeches and bright yellow cowboy boots. And to remove his hat in order to put on a fish-bowl space helmet more, it has to never under any circumstances thought to hide his collector's attire with a drab pressure suit, nor was he ever to be seen without a cowboy or western hanging halfway to his ankles.

It seems that every other planet in the solar system (plus a couple of the larger asteroids and old Sol itself) was out to lay claim to Earth, so SPACE never knew a dull moment; he might require the services of his trusty six-shooter (no pay there, for him). A single issue of SPACE WESTERN COMICS might contain three or four different stories involving alien invasions--- extraterrestrials seemed greater in number than even the Axis forces of the years past. No one wonders where in the hell SPURS ever found time to reload.

Accompanied by the Space Vigilantes, an assortment of planet-hopping ranch hands that included cauliflower-eared Head Cowboy Jenkins specialty, as you might surmise from his name, was a Native American (an Indian named Strong Bow (who of course packed a bow and arrow--and gun), SPURS would rocket away time and again to do battle with such enemy varmints as the Sun Master, the ruthless ex Mayo, the Moon-horror (rotund little horrors who looked as though they had not seen sun since dead Japanese soldiers in any old Hitler movie), the Mole-men of Venus (no shit!) and even the Asteroid who, the last time I looked, was in battle by constructed spacecraft when Mexico was conquering the Asteroid Hordes. (I should point out, in all fairness to the Mexicans, that what SPURS did to pass the time as the editor, the cover artists, the site director, characterization and scenes, as far as that is the case in sf-flavored comics, largely hit or miss, depending on whether the flying steggosaurus that marred Mayor Rice Burroughs' TARZAN AT THE EARTH'S CORE.

Exactly how SPACE WESTERN COMICS managed to last as long as it did eludes me. I can only assume that readers either felt it to be their duty to honor Gene Autry by buying anything or since Frederic Wertham very likely made readers (even the few left of actual grown-ups when he saw them) or else decided that the SPACE VIGILANTES were the only wielding gunslingers constituted some sort of truly far-out fantasy, in which everyone would shortly shake off.

Shake they must have, for SPURS JACKSON and his Space Vigilantes hadn't left the world too many times before they joined the FLYING SAUCERS, HISTORY OF, and the rest of those earlier minor fluctuations of comics in limbo.

THE WANDERING FAN CONT.

Getting back to more important matters before we bid you farewell, I'd like to mention that True Fan Adventure Theater, volume 2, number 1, should be available around the time of the 1971 Comic Art Convention here in New York. You can pick up your copy there or order it by mail shortly thereafter. It's probably the best issue of TRUE FAN to date. You'll like it.

Next issue: more stuff for you to read.

Big finishes next were my strong point.

How To Order & Contribute To Fanzines

((Recently I advertised for my fanzine, Shangai The Wonderful World of Comix. Some of the responses I received prompted this article.))

The first thing to keep in mind when ordering a fanzine, just like when shopping, is to look for something in which you are interested. If you're into animation, don't let cheesy looking art for Sango Art Blog dissuade you from answering an ad for Superworld. You'll only be disappointed. The best way to determine what interests is for you is to check and compare. Subscribe to address: in comics fandom, the best are Comic Fandom Guide and The Rapist's Hand-Lomalollotor. Look for the lettering ads. In doing this, make all things into account; is the ad all nicely designed? Does it look like the type of zine that would appeal to you? Do the contents look interesting enough to warrant paying whatever price is being asked? Are you familiar with any of the contributor's work? (This last one can work both ways: if it's work by someone you really dislike, you often order it regardless of the other material. On the other hand, if it is by some hack fan artist, you may likewise.) If the level of quality on this fanzine is this low, I'd better get it." Shit, these questions not always work. And artists and writers occasionally turn out good pieces and improve with time.)

After this, see what other people's opinions of the zine are. You might not be aside in fandom if you have seen or heard of the fanzine. Check reviewzines like Comics Review, and Xeroxes. The Monster Times also has a semi-regular fanzine review column by Bob Wapier (formerly of George) and by the time you read this, the Warren magazines will have begun their fanzine review column.

When you look at reviews, it's best to look not only at one specific fanzine, but to look at them all. Few of the fanzines that haven't advertised too extensively or ones with ads that have not been impressive enough to catch your attention that sound appealing to you.

Fine. You've found the fanzine you want. You have carefully picked and chosen to avoid the old fan tradition of the ripoff. Next comes the fine art of placing your order.

First, before you do anything else, type or print legibly on the envelope and the letter your address and make sure that your zip code is in both places. This is done so that it is impossible for the publisher to misread your address or to accidently throw it away. Third class mail isn't usually forwarded when the address is wrong, and won't even be delivered without zip code.

When ordering, say where you saw the ad, plug, or review. This helps the editor evaluate which plan of attack the best market for his money. For example: "I have send 5¢ for Gosh Ghasser #5, which I saw advertised in The Fly." Always include both numbers. Gosh Ghasser may be out on a monthly schedule and you may get a different issue than the one you want. The same with the zine is also helpful because many advertisers run the same ad in consecutive issues.

How to paying for your order. Checks or money orders are good because it decreases the chance of losing your money in the mail. They also serve as receipts. If you must send cash, don't send it floating loose in the envelope. The best way to protect your money is to put it between two pieces of cardboard the size of the envelope and tape them together so the money can't fall out. Taping it to one of the pieces of cardboard is another safety precaution.

In sending checks, always check the ad carefully for instructions. Some ads will have you make the check or money order payable to the editor or publisher whose name the

will give. Others will have you make it out to the name of the publication. If you see neither, make checks or money orders payable to the person rather than the fanzine. Fanzines are hobbies, and many folk don't have bank accounts in the name of their fanzines. It's not that easy for a fan to cash a check made out to the name of a fanzine. The only problem with checks is that they usually take about 20 days to clear through the bank. For this reason, careful fanzine editors wait for the check to clear before sending out an order.

This can be one of many things that can hold up the delivery of your fanzine. Other important reasons are the lack of time on the part of the editor and the mails. Most fanzines are sent out third Class mail because it is more economical than first Class. Third Class mail rarely takes less than 2 weeks and can take 6 weeks or more. Sometimes ads are placed before the actual printing of a fanzine, although it is usually the advertiser's responsibility to see that orders are now being taken", or something to this effect, it's not always the case. This, too, may delay your copy.

It is for all these reasons that it is unnecessary, and even a trifle annoying under occasions, to say "Please SOON me my copy of Graphic Story Monthly. I'll pull subscription if I don't get it within three days! This reviewer has taken a bitter-ness to a fanzine editor. He'll get it to you when he can. No sense in scolding can change that. Only when you haven't heard from the fanzine in about a month and a half or two months should you start to worry. Politely inquire as to the whereabouts of your fanzine, making sure to say when you placed your order. It's not infrequent, however, for a zine to get lost in the mails and it is through no fault of the editor that it does get lost. He usually tries to replace the copy if this is the case.

So now let's assume that you have received your copy of the fanzine that you ordered. You like the material and you think that you would like to contribute. The first thing you should do is to look at your work objectively and try to decide whether or not it reaches the quality of the fanzine. If you think so then send samples of your work to the editor. Small, flat, text pieces should be double-spaced and art should be done in black india ink for the best reproduction. Unless you are sending copies of your actual work, you should enclose enough stamped envelope to get your work back. A fanzine editor who receives submissions the editor cannot afford to mail back all the pieces he can't use. Always place your artwork between two pieces of heavy cardboard. This will reduce the chance of it being damaged by postal employes. Never fold your artwork.

When sending a contribution always include a note. The editor can always use a little encouragement. Tell him how much you enjoy his publication and what sort of an issue you would be to have him publish some of your work in his fanzine.

If your work is returned, the editor usually writes a letter to you and give you some constructive criticism. Don't be too discouraged. Look at it as another step on the road to fanzine. If you can accept criticism and learn from it, it will help you and can improve your work immensely.

In the event your work is accepted, you may have to wait a while to see it in print. Most fanzines are printed on regular intervals, so you'll have to wait for the issue to come out. Some editors' artwork might not be used. Space limitation often causes last minute omissions.

That's about it. Anyone with questions can write to the publisher. Good luck in your buying and contributing.

For those of you new to fandom, here are a few of the more prominent addresses to look for since in:

THE GASSIFIED ADVENTURER is free for a postcard to: THE GASSIFIED ADVENTURER, RES #1702 Box 1202 Mennonnee Falls, Wisconsin 53051.

THE ROCKET'S BLAST-COMICOLLECTOR is Fandom's oldest fanzine, celebrating it's 100th issue. The cost is $1 for a sample copy. Reviews and ads. Available from: The EPCA, 9875 SW 212 Street, Miami, Florida 33157.

THE MIDWOOD TIMES is free for a postcard from: THE MIDWOOD TIMES, P.O. Box 18372, Pub. Dept., Denver, Colorado 80218.

THE BUYER'S GUIDE is a bi-weekly advertising publication, run by Alan Dynabue Entertainers, RR #1, Box 297 East Moline, Ill. 61244.

i.e.

The month of June has been quite a month around here. We've managed to get out two issues of The Comic Reader, Time of Nineteen, and the program book for the 1973 Comic Art Convention. This is also the month that Paul, Steve and myself graduate from high school. Oh yeah, TCR also won the Comic Art Fan Award for the fanzine section of 1972. As you may realize, we're all very happy about this and we thank all of you who voted for the magazine.

And speaking of awards, congratulations to the folks at the Menomonie Public Gazette for winning both the Special Recognition Award from the Comic Art Fan Award for having the best non-newsstand magazine of 1972. Now that's what I call a good first year!

The last issue of Nineteen was, to say the least, a smash! We completely sold out of 2C about three weeks before this issue went to the printers. On top of that, practically all the mail was favorable. Thank you people for your kind comments... and keep on writing!

For all you folks who are reading this before the 1973 New York Comic Art Convention, if you plan to attend, don't be shy about dropping over to our table and saying hello. If you happen to be sitting off in a corner of the Commodore Hotel and reading this in between panels and film showings, then you've already said hi... so enjoy!

Next issue will contain a special report on the Convention. There'll be twenty pages or so of reports, transcripts of speeches and panels, and photographs of what went on at the Con.

This issue's cover: Don Heiks, a college student in Connecticut, contributes his rendition of Ironsides, as well as the illustration of GREEN LANTERN on the mailing page.

And speaking of covers, coming up next issue is CAPTAIN MARVEL, Jr., by Dave Cockrum, the artist on the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES, and CAPTAIN MARVEL, JR. (which is to appear as a back feature in SHAZAM).

As you can see, Tony Isabella has returned to our ranks and is contributing his saga of The Wandering Fan. Also back is Jim Steranko with an issue in Buffy Vohland, with his Buffy's Letter column. Other contributors include Jeffrey Wasserman's Jack Speke-Jeff couldn't make it this month because of a load of finals, but he will be back next issue.

That seems to be it for this issue, people. Next issue will be out the third week in August, with most of the regular features and the already mentioned Con report. See you there.

FANTASY UNLIMITED: Formerly Aftermath, formerly An Ending... It has been a good, dependable duplicated magazine with the best layout in comics, if you could read it. Anyhow, the editor, Alan Austin, got a better duplicator now. The address is Alan Austin, 47 Hesperus Crescent, Millwall, London E14.

COMIC CAVALOG: This was the forerunner of Comic Media. Started by Rick Brandes and Tom Bonnes, and became ON at issue 2. There was also a ON #1 and #2 published a year before. Then ON started, but was dropped, but has since been restored. OO is the new ON size and it is still a good buy. The address is Tom Bonnes, 14 Quinton House, Wanderbeck Road, London N6.

FANTASY DOMAIN: A very well put together newszine with news taken from The Comic Reader. It also has a very good section on distribution in England, and a No Dalar guide. It is published every 6-8 weeks. The address is Tom Bonnes, 14 Orange Road, Plaistow, London E13 0HN.

COMIC MEDIA NEWSLETTER: Comic Media #2 is now a 20-page newszine, layout with a news section on films, comics, shows, and so on, with news from TCR, Le Beyer and a few others. The address is Richard Burton, 22 Woodbine, Egham, Surrey.

COMIC MEDIA: CM is the only regular British general zine. The emphasis is placed more on the international comic scene, and each issue contains a special feature section (eg. MODESTY BLAISE and Peter Mitchell in the last issue; as well as regular columns. CM is out of London, but CM is available from TCR Publications at the USA for 60¢.

Continued next issue.

letters to Etcetera

Dear Paul,

I enjoyed Etcetera #2, particularly the two-page comic strip relative to the misspelling of Mr. O'Connor's name by Mr. Kipperberg. I really got a bang out of the last panel on page two... the one showing Godzilla holding a rifle. Hope to see the further adventures of Kornerberg versus Kipper. Best regards and keep up the good work.

Bob Barrow
c/o Lily Quin
19-20 Linden Street Ridgewood,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11227

(Well, Bob Barrow, glad you liked the strip. Lou O'Connor is happy you got a bang out of seeing "Godzilla" holding a rifle, but he tells me that you'll get even a bigger bang if you open that package that he has sent you! —Paul)

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Dear Paul,

Etcetera #2 was good, but I missed Revival-Survival by Slifer.

Goodly Bump,
Roger Slifer
Box 105
Norristown, In.
46060

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Dear Paul,

Etcetera #2 was almost as great as #1, and I hope that this continues with #3, #4, #5...etc. (ha!).

Tom Greenlonee' Shot In The Dark was a probing insight a la Jules Feiffer into why we read comics, and Breakdown by Moench was superb.

One question: How come the Kubertiesque is still raging? Yes, Barry Smith is great, but he hasn't got the years of tried and true experience that Kubert has (remember NOW, ENEMY ACE, and the early HAWKMAN?).

Anyway, keep up the good fight.

David L. Vineyard
304 Iden Drive
Gainesville, Tx. 76240

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Dear Mr. Kupperberg,

I got Etcetera #2 in the mail yesterday; it was quite good. How And Recommended and Comics Versus Artwork for obvious reasons, the biggest improvement over last issue. I only wish that Ilan had used some mention of the many arrows of fact in ...history of S Bruce Hedin.

Another point: "Media" is the plural form of "Medium", "Insignia"of "Insigne". There is no such word as "Insignias".

My compliments anyway. Good luck on #3.

Christopher Kelchert
6077 Genevieve Drive
Oakland, Calif.
94678

(Gee, Christopher, nobody's perfect! We try to catch as many of those mistakes in grammar as we can, but some slip through. What can I tell you? —Paul)

Dear Paul,

I think Xtcetera #2 had a better selection of articles than #1. Perhaps Jerry was definitely better, as he had been in the previous issue. In the future, however, I think this column should present the opinions of different fans on various issues.

New And Recommended is an excellent column since it can be used as a guide on how to spend your money on new publications.

I enjoyed reading almost all the other articles because they were interesting to me and they covered a wide range of topics. Overall, however, like to see more art and comic strips in Xtcetera. I think they are important as the articles, since Xtcetera is, after all, mainly an article zine. Try to have longer articles if it's possible.

Good luck with future issues! I'm sending along my money order for number 3.

Jason Chain
Toronto, Canada

(Your wish is our command (for a while thing like that!). Next issue's Random Jottings will move up and more different opinions from different fans on things going on.

As far as comic strips go, I doubt if there'll be very many in Xtcetera, because, like you say, we are mainly an article zine.

The lengths of articles is something that is left up to the writers.

Paul)

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Dear Paul,

A few comments about Xtcetera #2...

The sole purpose of New And Recommended, I'm sure, seems to be to inform fans about the good things floating around in the fanzine world. Well and good, but don't you think it should be used to tell the fans of the rip-offs as well? Let's see a bit more criticism of the things that need it, Fallon.

The "obituary" on WARP was most fitting. I was lucky enough to see it during a preview. If the play had preceded with the tasteless S.F. Society edition (who have printed most of the youth, and everybody in society away from that to revere), it may have just made the traditional, commercial comic book obsolete.

The O'Connor- Manley- Gafford strip seemed to be on "in" joke I didn't particularly get.

Bob Pinsha's piece on the underground was informative, but I think I could have lived without the info.

I think the main problem with Xtcetera is that it seems to ignore what has inspired it's creation: comic books. We have reviews of books about William Gaines and Warp. We have pieces of nostalgia and satire by Doug Bosnick and Jeff Shaara-man. We have reports on British fandom, and Phil Stark reviews.

This is all fine. But where are the comics? I'm not defending the current comic scene, God knows, and that's not what I'm asking you to do. But there is the opposite, in fact. Sure, there is Marvel and the Underground and big time publishers who look upon accuracy as a fad and not as a necessary part of life; put down the Comics Code, which is the equivalent of the witch hunts and the book art and writing that goes along with them. Xtcetera should try to educate its readers, give them ideas and opinions from a nine year old who gets his comics from Kroger's, twenty year old who digs Adams, Kirby, or Severin, to a 40 year old who feels nostalgic about SHAZAM!

Ira Silverberg
2955 West 33rd Street
Brooklyn, New York 11224

(Starting with this issue, New And Recommended becomes The Book Shelf. If you know what we're looking for yourself, we present both the good and the bad things in fandom.

As far as the William Gaines book review and the other things on the same level, they're not connected with the comics. There's more to comics fandom than just this month's SUPERMAN. Science fiction, underground, comic strips, etc., are all related in some way. Besides, there is only so much you can write about a comic book without falling asleep.

I'd give you more of an answer now, except this is the end of the page and I don't have any more room, really, maybe another day.

Paul)

the BOOK SHELF

CISCO KID/ KRAZY KAT
THE SPIRIT 1
EPOCH 4
CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN 19
TARZAN OF THE APES
GOLDEN FLANNIER
FOOM!

THE CISCO KID #1 and KRAZY KAT #1, Street Enterprises, Box 255, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051. 60¢ each.

The third and fourth reprint books from the gang at The Menomonee Falls Gazette have finally come to us. This time around they are THE CISCO KID by Jose Luis Salinas, and George Harriman's famous KRAZY KAT. To say that these two books are nice would be a gross understatement. They are absolutely out of this world!

First off is THE CISCO KID from 1951. This 32 page magazine reprints over two months worth of CISCO KID, the first a two parts of a three parter. The second part is due out about the same time you read this review. In fact, Jose Luis Salinas, is beautiful, and the story is one that concerns a bad guy and Women's Lib.

If you're a fan of humor, then you already know about KRAZY KAT by George Harriman. KRAZY KAT is one of the funniest comic strips ever to see print. The humor that was presented originally in the 40-50's is as funny now as it was then.

There are 31 pages of KRAZY KAT dailies, each and every one will drive you out of your skull with laughter.

For 60¢ a piece you cannot go wrong with these books. Buy them now, because you should've gotten them yesterday.

/Liam O'Connor

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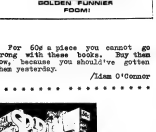

THE SPIRIT #1
Krupp Comic Works, P.O. Box 5699, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53211. 50¢ a copy.

(c) 1951 Will Eisner

Many things are reprinted nowadays with much of it being well worth your money. But dig into your pockets and take out 4 bits and buy this underground...you'll love it!

This first issue (with hopes of many more to come) of THE SPIRIT starts off with a wrap-around color cover by Will Eisner. Use Eisner drew blood; see Eisner drew naked women; see Eisner drew...

What follows are four reprints of the SPIRIT Sunday sections, all from 1946- all classic SPIRIT. Heavy on the shadows and light on humor. Read then, you'll laugh.

Interlaced between the reprints are four brand new one page SPIRIT strips. These four deal with more contemporary problems like a militant activist, a satire on people's views on crime and violence, on

blacks and on guns.

It's funny, it's clean (somewhat), it's great, it's 50¢, it's the SPIRIT! Need I say more?

/Paul Hugli

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SPOCH #4, "Gene" Publications, 1121 Wolf Lane, Indianapolis, In. 46224. 40c 3rd Class Mail, or 50¢ 1st Class Mail.

SPOCH is a zine that combines a good assortment of art and articles to come up with a fine fanzine. It is a "Gene" Publication (the Gene, of course of you who don't know, consists of Gene Wolfenbarger, Duffy Vohland, Dave Underwood, and Roger Sterz). This is a very pleasant publication.

The issue opens with an article by Greg Potter on Tuning In the Comics Media, a piece on how comics affect us and how the reader up to the climax of the story; and then everything is changed. Next, Ray Miller takes us down Memory Lane with the BLACK HOLE. Following that is an article by Mark Frazier where Mark tells us how to start a Sharon Tate Cult. Previously, Mark is best with the title of SHAZAAM.

A very fine strip drawn by John Byrne and written by Steve Mathingly follows. John is an exceptionally good fan artist. In the small sample of his work, see the full page on the last issue of Western.)

After that is What Have the Comics Lost? by Greg Potter, One For the Road by Roy Ebbing by Steve Gilly on the STAR SOLDIERS OF VICTORY, and Mail Call by SPOCH editor Steve Mattingly.

A great number of artists are represented. John Byrne, Steve Fabian, Jeff Schnott, Steve Fabian, Duffy Vohland, Newton and others are represented, but none in great quantity (although much quality) except for John Byrne.

SPOCH is a nice non-slick zine. It comes with no staples, and the binding is cover has a poster on the reverse side. All in all, SPOCH's a pleasant zine to what makes it different and friendly.

/Alan O'Connor

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TALES OF THE AZTEC by Bruce Hogarth, Tom Sutton, and Burne Hogarth, Supergraphics, $9.95 (hardcover).

Once again the legend of the AZTEC is re-told. This time, it is with words by S.M. Burroughs and art by Burne Hogarth. Yes, Hogarth, the master artist who drew TARZAN many years ago.

This is a book to get and to hold onto forever. The art can only be described as fantastic and the story as delicious. A lot of other adjectives. Pages come alive in a way unlike any I'd say. Other artists can make them. The story, which by now is fairly unoriginal, is greatly enhanced by the art which is in turn enhanced by bound by the high quality slick paper and FULL color and the captions are placed and presented in blocks in various places in the story so that we don't interfere with the art, a la Prince Valiant.

The book is 160 pages long, with 122 of them featuring the magnificent art and story. Introduction by Francis Coppola Horn. The introduction covers the Aztec legend, the beginnings written about him. Included are samples of his other, earlier works.

This book is beautiful and if you pass up a chance to buy it, you'll be sad to doubt your sincerity as a fan of sword and sorcery. Treat yourself, kick yourself forever.

/Alan O'Connor

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THE CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN #19, 60¢.

At last! It has arrived! What?, you ask. Why, CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN number 19. Yes, the fine work of C. Beck's gargantuan hobby gone mad has increased by one. And it is a high quality mag of more than casual interest. Like these many interesting bits and pieces:

Those deliciously compressed, ingenious, gargantuan, and delightful reviews of films recent and of yesteryears (unfortunately not available in letter "B"--conclusion). Included among the list of recent films mini-reviewed you will find Dr. Phibes Rises Again, Slaughterhouse Five, Frits the Cat, Fragg, Sisybeard, Hundsley, Jeremy, Son of Dracula, and Asylum.

There is a good informative interview with Douglas Trumbull, director of Silent Running. Unfortunately, there is too much emphasis

placed on the special effects of that intriguing, though flawed, film.

Number 15 also contains part one of an interview with Ray Harryhausen, master of special effects and animation. This one was good; the questions get a lot of detailed information out of Harryhausen. But a few of the photos illustrating this interview we've seen too many times before.

Then there is a section where seven recent Hammer films were given brilliant treatment--plot synopses, photos, and analyses (in the CoF tradition). The films covered are Dracula A.D. 1972, Countess Dracula, Vampire Circus, Twins of Evil, Blood from the Mummy's Tomb (I wish I'd seen that!), Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde, and, The Hands of the Ripper. Even though we wish there were more photos per film covered, and even though the mini-plot synopses were often compressed into incomprehensibility, we'd like to see this sort of thing done more often.

Next comes the longer, more detailed reviews of EPG, The Pied Piper and Stanley Kubrick's Clockwork Orange.

The Fantasy Film News is welcomed, though it is a bit stale in parts.

Then, sprinkled through the issue are Mr. Beck's extended editorial comments or whatever; as usual, both are interesting and pretentious-take your pick.

And, the whole thing is wrapped in a cover by Basilo Gintron---a colorful, enjoyable, if not artistically beautiful, painting.

Yes, this issue was a worthy effort. It was definitely up to the usual standards of CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN. It is a shame that this magazine has distribution troubles, and it is even a worse shame that Mr. Beck is cursed with an inefficient mailing department---the blame for which we cannot, in justice, place upon him.

/Paul Briggs

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GOLDEN FUNNIES, SynaPube Enterprises, RR #1, Box 297, East Moline, Illinois 61244. 12 issues (in U.S.)-$4.50, 26 issues- $9.00, 52 issues-$17.00. (Published weekly)

It is an accepted fact in fandom, as it is in most other fields, that when something good comes along, there will undoubtedly be imitations following close behind. On rare occasions, the imitation is as good as the original. This, however, is not the case with GOLDEN FUNNIES, the newest publication from SynaPube Enterprises.

GOLDEN FUNNIES is a tabloid size, 12 page strip-reprint zine. I was going to say much in the tradition of The Menomonee Falls Gazette, but The Gazette is good! This zine is a poorly packaged, sloppily done imitation of The Gazette. To begin with, GOLDEN FUNNIES only offers the reader 12 pages of material for 50¢ cover price (or 35¢ subscription price). That's not a hell of a lot to read. In fact, I went through it in less than 5 minutes, whereas in The Gazette I'm able to sit back for 45 minutes to an hour and read---and this for 5¢ less!

After one gets past the skimpy size, one looks at the strips offered within the pages of GOLDEN FUNNIES. To start the issue is "The very first SUPERMAN Sunday page, from November 5, 1939". This is all well and good, and I enjoyed seeing it, except for the fact that the page was taken and reproduced directly from the original (as was everything in the issue) and the screening was extremely poor, even though, according to Editor Light, the screening helped the strips reproduce better. In fact, only the KRAZY KAT and DICK TRACY dailies came out any good, and I assume that this is because they were shot from the black and white originals.

Oh yeah, in their ads, we were promised PRINCE VALIANT, TERRY AND THE PIRATES, L'IL ABNER, and TARZAN, but when it got to the magazine itself, I didn't see any of these strips. The strips that do appear are the above mentioned SUPERMAN, DAN DUNN, 2 pages of BUCK ROGERS (not, as was advertised, from the "very first"), MANDRAKE, LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND, BRINGING UP FATHER, KATZENJAMMER KIDS, 2 pages of DICK TRACY, TAILSPIN TOMMY, and KRAZY KAT.

Unless the size and quality of reproduction and material in GOLDEN FUNNIES improves, I'd recommend that you buy The Menomonee Falls Gazette.

/Paul Kappenberg

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ROOM, Box 1827, New York, N.Y., 10027. Membership costs $2.50.

Also, I must admit that I expected something warty or $2.50, because I sought something meriting s-ness more.

It arrived dully enough. The "surprise, spectacular envelope" was no more than a meagre 9" x 12" sealed (so 2 or 3 of your stickers would stick) manila mailing envelope, with a very immature, and quite unreadable plasma-type job on MIKE's pan on the front. The Green Dag's face was the worst spot on the package face, and it was undeniably one of the worst Bjerkaho renditions I have ever seen.

For a Starenko guided project, I had (concurring with their highly exaggerated build-up) anticipated a well-composed, eye-plastering design on each sticker. On the one hand, Starenko's History of the Comics, by Pete & Ted and sewn for Chicago, February 20 and it arrived April 21... 60 days! And this from a Canadian everywhere in London, Ontario!

The Starenko poster ("the glorious, proud 22" x 28"...") was something I think even his two sessile-eyed fans would approve upon. It depicted an ilk of the THING that was fat, scaly, and had the features of REED RICHARDS and SUPERMAN born in the Fantastic Four Roundhouse. A collage of heroes and heroines bombarded on this to vary from the many other thing that detracted most from this work. Starenko used Marvel's 135 word tirade on the POOH thing! Did he make it ridiculous enough that we have Lee's cackling even on our stickers, as well as silly slogans on the six stickers?

The greatest smorlieg, though, is the FOOH magazine. This is so badly contrived as to be insulting! The cover consists of FOOH in a cage and more of his ridiculous verse. Upon the enlargement of FOOH, obviously he never read the interior of the thing! Jim Starenko proceeds by telling us the how and why of the whole exciting mystery in the above zine... new, exciting material that invariably thought up within a half-considered 30 minutes. What he may took 7... a dozen conferences a score of phone calls! A year of mailing a lot of the effort that was supposedly put into it.

After Starenko's 2-page introduction, we "introduced" the cover of the Ballpen Gang, including Stan Lee John Buscema, BASCALLY Roy Thomas, JOLLIN' Joe Sinnott, and FUMPIN' Harry Chester... with the shoddy accompanying article on each, by golly!

Right after our brief neophyte-tances with Dallenbach, we launch upon this crossword puzzle, a jumble, and, shock, a silly cut very boring game, "Roving Target" (by the JAUNTY one himself), and, most astonishingly, a color-in page. You see, the last is for you to color in here to draw in 6 weeks on these blank forms, and now that I might have used during his tangles with TAM, Dallenbach, Calkins, Lupoff, oops, excuse me,but I got carried a way there. But you get the picture. I mean, these are the most improper items one could have in a serious circulation slick-zine such as this.

After this, we encounter a 4-page article on CAPTAIN STERIC which is reprox and the like. The article is fine, but why/what is the point. Apparent FP fan because it is simply a very common fan article on a FANTASTIC FOUR, and what it explains, any FP fan already knows.

"The Comic-Reviews and Information section..." (7 pages) is announced to consist of up-to-the-minute well-informed conversation. Well, it's hardly that. Three pages are used for this page of the 1st of the Marvel b-and-e covers. The news, suffice to say, is old to the diehard:

Oh yes, there is also a one page review of fanzines. It contains (and I suspect it is all that stands across the management here) reviews of Kerosene, Starling, Comments, volumes 1 & 2, Sternko's Conference, The Comic Reader, Graphic Story, and The Collector. About Conference, Sternko says, "...you can't afford to be without it." Modest, huh?

Generally, there is little valid information in the whole thing. And with POOH being a quarterly mag, can the honorable Jim Starenko not manage to receive up to the minute reports? The best bargain of the lot is the membership card, nice, and gold colored, too, made of cardboard, and even has a place to sign your name.

POOH's value: a totally incredulous fan mag, printed once every 3 months, a decrepid poster, 6 useless stickers, and a none too special envelope! And at least 2 months before the issue reaches your door!

POOH? Whazzat?

More Heavy #1

NEXT ISH: AUGUST 11

ETCETERA 4

SPECIAL CONVETION REPORT..

The fourth fantastic issue of Etcetera will feature a special in-depth report on the 1973 Comic Art Convention... the event of the year! Everybody gets together on this special issue to give you the complete picture on what went on at the year's biggest convention! Panel transcripts, the keynote speech, plus many many pages of photographs! If you intend to be there, Etcetera #4 will serve as a fantastic souvenir...if you can't attend then this issue will let you in on all that went on!

PLUS:

THE WANDERING FAN by Tony Isabella

BREAKDOWN by Doug Moench

JACH SPAKE by Jeffrey H. Wasserman

FANDOM FORUM by Neal Pozner

SHOT IN THE DARK by Tom Greeniones

...and more from Paul Briggs on the world of books and The Bookshelf.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

STILL AVAILABLE!

the fabulous first issue!

A Spanner In the Cogs
BY STEVE UTLEY JR.

JACH SPAKE
JEFFREY H. GOLDENBERG

Wandering FAN
TONY GENTILELLA

Once Upon A Hallowe'en!

Lester Dent: The Man Behind The Man
BY BOB PRIDDY

Great Conan Imitators
BY PAUL BRIGGS

CONVENTION REPORT:
CREATION II- nov. 24-26

Breakdown
DOUG MENIKOFF

...PLUS MUCH MORE

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